THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

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THE UNSPEAKABLE SCOT

BY

T. W. H. CROSLAND

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The Unspeakable Scot

I

THE SUPERSTITION

THIS book is for Anglo-Saxons. It is also in the nature of a broad hint for Scotchmen. My qualification to bestow broad hints upon the politest and most intellectual of the peoples is that I possess a large fund of contempt for the Scottish character. Also, I had the misfortune to be born on a day which is marked, sadly enough, in the calendars, BURNS DIED. So that, one way and another, I appear to have been raised up for the work before us, even as Dr. J. M. Barrie [1]

[1] In a booklet entitled *The Kilt and How to Wear It*, the Hon. Stuart Erskine assures us that "in Scotland

was raised up to assist the fortunes of a certain brand of smoking mixture.[1]

Of course, if a man speak of the Scotch in any but the most dulcet tones he invites the onslaught of a thousand witty pens. The bare title of the present essay is pronounced by good judges to be uncomplimentary to Scotland, and I can well imagine that since its announcement Drs. Lang, Archer, Robertson Nicoll, Ross, and Hamish Hendry, together with a base residuum of anonymous reviewers, have made a point of sleeping in their clothes in order that they might be "ready, aye ready," to deal faithfully with the haughty Southron at the earliest possible moment. I like to think, however, that Dr. Lang, who, with true Scottish shrewdness, avowed himself but yesterday a convinced

every man is a gentleman." On the other hand, in England quite a number of Scotchmen seem to be doctors. I trust that I shall not be considered wanting in respect if I prefix the august, abdominal "Dr." to the names of all Scotch gentlemen whom I have occasion to mention.

[1] *Vide* that piece of arrant Jeromeism, *My Lady Nicotine*.

crystal-gazer,[1] has had due prevision of the friendliness of my intentions. Were I disposed to bloody battle, I might have opened fire by remarking in hot type that if you scratch a Scotchman you will find a very low person indeed. Or I could have thrown from my pompom that shining projectile:

False Scot
Sold his king
For a groat.

But who, that has a feeling for warfare, would fight with a Scotchman? Such a one, I hope, does not breathe; the plain fact being that if a Scot beats you, he beats you; whereas, if you begin to beat a Scot, he will assuredly bawl, in the King's name, for the law. "Hech, sirs, rin for the polis. Ah 'm gettin' whupped!" Let us therefore continue our discourse amicably.

Your proper child of Caledonia believes in his bones that he is the salt of the earth. Prompted by a glozing pride, not to

[1] Andrew Lang, "Magic Mirrors and Crystal-gazing," *Monthly Review*, February, 1902.

say by a black and consuming avarice, he has proclaimed his saltiness from the house-tops in and out of season, unblushingly, assiduously, and with results which have no doubt been most satisfactory from his own point of view. There is nothing creditable to the race of men, from filial piety to a pretty taste in claret, which he has not sedulously advertised as a virtue peculiar to himself. This arrogation has served him passing well. It has brought him into unrivalled esteem. He is the one species of human animal that is taken by all the world to be fifty per cent cleverer and pluckier and honester than the facts warrant. He is the daw with a peacock's tail of his own painting. He is the ass who has been at pains to cultivate the convincing roar of a lion. He is the fine gentleman whose father toils with a muck-fork. And, to have done with parable, he is the clumsy lout from Tullietudlescleugh, who, after a childhood of intimacy with the crudest sort of poverty, and twelve months at "the college" on moneys wrung from the

diet of his family,[1] drops his threadbare kilt and comes South in a slop suit to instruct the English in the arts of civilisation and in the English language. And because he is Scotch, and the Scotch superstition is heavy on our Southern lands, England will forthwith give him a chance; for an English chance is his birthright. Soon, forbye, shall he be living in "chambers" and writing idiot books. Or he shall swell and hector and fume in the sub-editor's room of a halfpenny paper. Or a pompous and gravel-blind city house shall grapple him to its soul in the capacity of confidential clerk. Or he shall be cashier in a jam factory, or "boo and boo" behind a mercer's counter, or "wait on" in a coffee tavern, or, for that matter, soak away his chapped spirit in the four-ale bars off Fleet Street. Hence, as an elegant writer in one of the weekly reviews puts it, the Englishman

[1] The Free University Education Scheme of Dr. Andrew Carnegie (many times millionaire, beloved of the American steel worker, and author of a book called *Triumphant Democracy*, if you please) will no doubt change all this.

"is painfully aware that it is the Scot who thrusts him aside in the contest for many of the best prizes."

When one turns to the intimate study of the Scotch character as limned by Scotch authority, one finds oneself confronted with the work of two schools of artists, which, for the sake of convenience, we will dub the Old and New Schools. The Old School—of which, by the way, every Scotchman save one is either a member or a supporter—has had a tremendous vogue and has accomplished superhuman things for the country and people of its love. To this school the Scotch superstition owes its origin and its firm grip on the imagination of the average white man. It is a forthright, downright, thorough sort of school, not in the least diffident or mealy-mouthed, not in the least ambiguous, not in the least infected with that "proud reserve" which is understood to be Scotland's noblest heritage. Among the choice exemplars of the art of the Old School—and it has thousands of choice exemplars—we may reckon

Dr. George Lockhart, who wrote the *Memoirs* and thereby earned for himself imperishable fame. Lockhart was a "Scotland-for-ever" man of the first water. "As for the [Scots]," he says, "none will, I think, deny them to have been a Brave, Generous, Hardy People. . . . As the Scots were a Brave, so likewise were they a Polite People; every Country has its own peculiar Customs, and so had Scotland, but in the main they lived and were refined as other Countries; and this won't seem strange, for the English themselves allow the Scots to be a Wise and Ingenious People, for say they to a Proverb, '*They never knew a* Scots *Man a Fool.*' And if so, what should hinder them from being as well bred and civilised as any other People? Those of Rank (as they still do) travelled Abroad into foreign Countries for their Improvement, and vast numbers, when their Country at home did not require their services [mark the fine sophistry] went into that of foreign Princes, from whence after they had gained immortal Honour and Glory, they

returned home; and as it is obvious that at this very time (which must chiefly proceed from this humour of Travelling) the Scotch Gentry do far exceed those of England, so that in the one you shall find all the accomplishments of well-bred gentleman, and in your country English Esquires all the Barbarity imaginable." [1] Thus Dr. George Lockhart, two hundred years ago. 'T is a fair picture and a winning, if a trifle overstated. There stands your brilliant, and at the same time unassuming, figure of a Scotchman—"brave," "generous," "hardy," "polite," "refined," "not a fool," "well bred," "civilised," "travelled," "wise," "ingenious," and immortally "honourable" and "glorious." Who can withstand him? Who would deny him the look of love, the patriot glow? Certainly not the men of his own blood, who have their livings to get. Certainly not the Scotchman, who perceives, by favour of Dr. Lockhart, his own impeccable

[1] George Lockhart, *Memoirs Concerning the Affairs of Scotland from Queen Anne's Accession to May, 1707.*

sonsie self done to the life. To this day the artists of the Old School continue to paint the same inspiring portrait, and if you look into the latest replica, by no less judicial a hand than that of Dr. John Hill Burton [1] you shall discover the undying lineaments, bespeaking the undying virtues, and composed sweetly to the purposes of the undying advertisement.

So much for the Old School. As for the New School, I take credit that it is a discovery of my own. It consists of one man only. He is a Scotchman, and his name is William Robertson Nicoll. Dr. Nicoll is the editor of the *British Weekly*. He also edits the *Bookman*, and lounges round letters in a paper called the *Sketch*. Some time ago this great and good Scotchman was accused of indulging in too many literary aliases. We were then informed by a *protégé* of his that it would be well for us to lift reverent eyes and behold in Dr. William Robertson Nicoll "a force in letters"—"the only force, some of

[1] John Hill Burton, D.C.L., LL.D., *The Scot Abroad*.

us think," added the incense-breathing *protégé*. We looked and beheld. Also we read, in *Who's Who*, that Dr. Nicoll was the author of *The Lamb of God*, *The Key of the Grave*, *The Incarnate Saviour*, *The Return to the Cross*, *The Secret of Christian Experience*, *Songs of Rest*, and *Sunday Afternoon Verses*, all, no doubt, excellent and exciting works, but obviously sealed to a department of letters in which we have not specialised. Therefore, we took "the-force-in-letters" notion for granted. Our own idea of Dr. Robertson Nicoll's relation to letters will be set forth duly in another chapter. Meanwhile, it is necessary to say that Dr. Nicoll is one of those delightfully irresponsible literary forces who babble of "Mr. S. R. Crockett's *great* novel *Joan of the Sword Hand*," in one breath, and with the next pray to be delivered from " a misuse of words."

But let us give honour where honour is due. There are white marks even on the editor of the *British Weekly*. For quite two years

past his dropsical pennyworth has been our constant solace in times of darkness and difficulty. Each week it contains a lengthy and helpful letter by one "Claudius Clear." Many young Scotch writers have told us in many a useful paragraph that they do not think they are breaking a confidence when they say that "Claudius Clear" is one of the pen names of Dr. Robertson Nicoll. So that on the whole "Claudius" is a Scotchman, despite the circumstance that he dates his correspondence from Basil Regis, Middlesex, and masquerades in a name which is about as Scotch as "Schiepan." For that matter, anybody might have guessed it from his syntax. And being a Scotchman, "Claudius" is, of course, omniscient and infallible. That is where the absurd beauty of him comes in. That, Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, is why one reads the *British Weekly*. Do you wish to know how to run the *Times?* Would you care to be instructed in "the art of conversation"? Are you anxious to learn what is really meant by "good manners"? Would

you be advised on "Order and Method," "Brilliance," "Overwork," "Handwriting," "Publishing as a Profession," "Editing as a Profession," "The Keeping of Old Letters," "How to Remember and how to Forget," "The Art of Life," "The Art of Taking things Coolly," "Turning Out the Fools," or indeed on any other matter under the sun—from "Vanity" to "Samuel"?—why, you just turn up "Claudius," and there you are; two columns which settle the question swiftly and for ever. What wonder, then, that in my anxiety to get at the truth about Scotchmen, I should turn up "Claudius"? Nor have I turned him up in vain, as witness the following admirable words:

"In the first place, the Scotsman is a son of the rock. The circumstances of his birth and upbringing are as a rule very stern. He is cradled in the storm; he has to fight for life in a rough climate, in a huddle of grey houses. The amenities of life are by no means plentiful. As a rule, money is scarce. There are few demonstrations of affection;

one is made to feel that he must trust himself, that man is a soldier, and life is a fight. [Here, Scot-like, the worthy "Claudius" breaks off to indulge in a little pathetic personal reminiscence.] When I look back to my early years it seems to me that the whole atmosphere was laden with care, that the strain on the hearts of the people was so tightened by the material needs of those who depended on them that life was a taut rope on which only a trained acrobat could keep his balance. The result was a feeling of constant anxiety, a dread of the future. It was haunted by fears which could hardly be measured, and as the years went on their difficulties seemed to increase. [Which, to say the least, is clumsily put.] In this way young Scotsmen were taught to take things seriously. They knew that their right arms must serve them, and they did not lean upon others. They were thus fiercely independent. They asked nothing from those about them—the asking would be vain. As they sought nothing they would give nothing.

Acknowledgment of superior position they resolutely refused; and they were ready to resent every assumption of superiority. They knew well that the door of opportunity opens but seldom, and were eager to enter it when it did open. They knew that success in any form was to be paid for, and they were willing to pay. They would work hard without complaining, and they were willing to sacrifice, and ever came to disdain the pleasures and amusements of life. They had been taught that it was of no use to complain, and they did not complain. But they made amends for this by refusing to be gracious, by a reserved and proud manner. They knew that competition was the law of life, and they were none too gentle in dealing with their competitors. Those who achieved positions were objects of criticism, and the criticism was pitiless enough. For a fight they were in constant readiness. 'Touch me gin you daur,' was the national motto, and there never was one more expressive of character. The Scotsman as a rule does not

take the offensive, but those who meddle with him must take all the consequences."[1]

Clearly, as one might say, a Daniel come to judgment! "Claudius Clear," the New School, struts and roisters and swaggers as your Scot must do, or perish; but, on the whole and out of the honesty of his heart, he will modify. Perhaps he was not in the best of humours when he wrote the foregoing. Anyway it rather disposes of the gallant and debonair vision conjured up for us by the glowing pencils of the Old School. The generous, polite, refined, well-bred, civilised, and immortally honourable and glorious Scotchman of Dr. George Lockhart becomes, under the brush of Dr. Robertson Nicoll, another and a distinctly less beautiful personality. He is born on the rock. The amenities of life are not for him. He is haunted by constant fears. He will give nothing. He refuses to be gracious. He is none too gentle in dealing with his competitors. And

[1] "English and Scotch," *The British Weekly*, January 16, 1902.

instead of saying "*Nemo me impune lacessit*," as you might expect of a young man who has been to college, he whoops "Touch me gin you daur," like any common rowdy. When I come to think of it, I am much obliged to the New School.

On another matter—a very big matter, indeed, with your common Scotchman—Dr. Nicoll is equally frank. "I think I may also say," he remarks, "that the Scottish people cared very much for education and knowledge, far more in my opinion than the average Englishman. They thought about learning as the New Englanders did in the days of Emerson. The learned man was much more respected than the rich man. Perhaps there was an intuition that in the end of the day knowledge is the key to everything. But thirty years ago, at all events, knowledge was regarded as an end, and its possessor was profoundly esteemed. The *summum bonum*[1] of the best Scottish

[1] English and Scotch," *The British Weekly*, January 16, 1902.

youth in those days was to be a professor." *Summum bonum* is scarcely the phrase, but that and the New Englanders may pass. Scotland, admittedly, enjoys a reputation for learning of a sort. Once, I visited Edinburgh with a Scotchman. It was a rash thing to do, yet I did it. On the road north my Scotchman filled me with tales of his country's culture. "You are not going into a dirty English city," quoth he, "but into a centre of light and leading. Every man, woman, and child in 'aud Immemour' can at least read, and every publican in the place keeps a set of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, a copy of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, and plenty of back numbers of the *Nineteenth Century*, just as an English publican keeps for the use of his customers the *Post Office Directory* and *Whitaker's Almanack*." And the first thing I noticed when we got into Edinburgh was a fruiterer's sign, upon which was written in startling letters:

FRUITS IN THERE SEASON

All the same, I concede that the Scotch

really do love learning. I gather, too, from unbiassed sources that they starve their mothers and make gin-mules of their fathers to get it. And when it is gotten, what a monstrous and unlovely possession it usually turns out to be. For your Scotchman always takes knowledge for wisdom. His learning consists wholly of "facts and figures," all grouped methodically round that heaven-sent date, A.D. 1314,[1] and if you cannot tell him off-hand the salary of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the population of Otaheite and the names of the fixed stars, he votes you a damned ignorant Southron, and goes about telling his friends that he should n't wonder if you never went to "the schule." It may rejoice him to know that his readiness to answer all manner of questions involving book learning is in point of fact the beginnings of a species of idiocy. Persons of whom this idiocy has got properly hold are

[1] "The Battle of Bannockburn was won by the Scotch in 1314. Here's tae us, wha's like us?"—*Scotch Toast.*

styled by the medical profession "idiot *savants*." "In all asylums," says Professor Vivian Poore, "you will find idiot *savants*. . . . There used to be at Earlswood—and I saw him when I visited Earlswood—an idiot quite incapable of taking care of himself, but who had a most extraordinary memory. When I went to the asylum the superintendent said to me: 'Ask that man anything you like.' It was rather a strange thing to be told to do; I said: 'What kind of thing shall I ask about?' And he said: 'Any ordinary bit of knowledge.' I said: 'Tell me about Socrates.' The idiot then drew himself up like a child would who was about to repeat a lesson, gave a cough, and told me about Socrates. . . . He knew a great deal more about Socrates than I did; he knew when he was born, why he was condemned, the name of his wife, and everything that was essential to be known. This he repeated without difficulty. The superintendent gave a grin and said: 'Would you like to ask him anything else?' I was afraid that

the man might ask me something. I said: 'What do you know about comets?' Immediately he gave me—I presume correctly—all the facts about the chief comets, their periods of revolution, the names of the best known, and so on. Nothing that had ever been read by this patient did he seem to forget. The words which had been read to him seemed to have stuck to the cells of his brain like so much superior glue, and nothing would eradicate it." [1]

How very, very, very Scotch! Who has not met just this idiot *savant* in a newspaper office, at the meetings of absurd societies, at the houses of uncultivated people? And always, always, he is Scotch. And always, always, he has that sententious trick of drawing himself up to launching into his subject by way of the self-satisfied cough of conscious knowledge.

And now, to make a handsome end for a brilliant chapter, let us remember

[1] George Vivian Poore, *A Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence*, 1901.

I. That Hadrian had the excellent sense to build a wall for the purpose of keeping the Scotch out of England.

II. That for a thousand years the Scot was England's bitterest enemy, and plotted and made war against her with France.

III. That the Scotch deserted that large lame woman (and, according to the Scotch, that paragon of all the virtues), Mary Stuart, in her hour of direst need.

IV. That it was the Scotch who sold Charles I. (and a Stuart) to the Parliamentarians for £400,000.

V. That the Stuarts were the wickedest and stupidest kings Europe has ever known.

VI. That the Scotch are in point of fact quite the dullest race of white men in the world, and that they "knock along" simply by virtue of the Scottish superstition

coupled with plod, thrift, a gravid manner, and the ordinary endowments of mediocrity.

VII. That it was a Scotchman who introduced thistles into Canada, and that, very likely, it was a Scotchman who introduced rabbits into Australia.

II

PREDECESSORS

FROM the day he first clapped eyes on him, the Englishman has felt that there was something wrong about the Scotchman. And this feeling rapidly crystallised itself into literature. Many early ballads against the Scotch are to be found by him who cares to look for them. That Chaucer did not love Scotchmen is pretty certain, though there is nothing in his writings to prove it. The same holds true of Spenser. But when one comes to Shakespeare the case is very much altered. There can be no getting away from the circumstance that Shakespeare knew his Scotchman through and through. Any Scot who is feeling a desire to be particularly humble and to learn the real truth about

himself and his compatriots should read and read again the tragedy of *Macbeth*. Of course, Shakespeare does not count much in Scotland. Whenever a Scottish writer of the old school has to speak of him, he does so with a grumbling grudgingness as who should say, "The man was a genius, but not a Scot, what a peety!"

"Here Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plant," warbled Burns. Think of it! And I have seen a Scotch reviewer complain that a certain author was cursed with a "Shakespearean smartness." This antipathy for the Bard of Avon has often created much wonderment in the mind of the Englishman, and the cause of it, one may guess, is that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth*. There is scarcely a line in that tremendous drama which does not mean bitter reading for Scotchmen. About the first person named is one Macdonwald:

> The merciless Macdonwald
> Worthy to be a rebel for to that,
> The multiplying villainies of Nature
> Do swarm upon him.

In a neighbouring passage we are given a beautiful insight into Scottish views of warfare. Ross is made to say:

> Sweno the Norway's King craves composition,
> Nor would we deign him burial of his men
> Till he disbursed at Saint Colmes' inch
> Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

"Ten thousand dollars to our general use"! From the beginning of time Scotch fighting men have been mercenaries, and Scotch armies have insisted upon fining a vanquished foe. They did it in France; and they did it in their own country. And, after Naseby, the Scotch army in England, coming to the conclusion that there was nothing more to be done, straightway demanded a sum of money in the way of solatium for leaving the country. "Nor would we deign him burial of his men till he disbursed," hits them hard. Shakespeare, as was his way, understood. Then one comes to the celebrated scene on the blasted heath. Here enter three witches, and to them Macbeth and Banquo. Macbeth, bloated with pride and devoured with

ambition, falls an easy victim to Shakespeare's trinity of hags.

> All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
> All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
> All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

The man swells visibly as a Scotchman should, and stalks off heroically, full of the consciousness of his own bigness. And mark how arrant a Scotchman he becomes in the result. In his castle he has for guest a king who has trusted him and bestowed honours and dignities upon him. "Conduct me to mine host," says the unsuspecting monarch. "We love him highly, and shall continue our graces towards him." And all the time the excellent Macbeth and his excellent lady are plotting murder. When it comes to the point of actual killing, the gentleman's Scotch spirits fail him; he is really not sure, don't you know, whether after all it ought to be done. Then the lady very naturally grows disgusted and shrill:

> Was the hope drunk,
> Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
> And wakes it now to look so green and pale

At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;
Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

And what a deliciously smug Scotch answer is immediately forthcoming! Says the faint-hearted traitor:

I dare all that may become a man;
Who dares do more, is none.

Here we have the moralising scoundrel in which Scotland is so prolific turned out to the life. Right through the play Shakespeare pitilessly holds up to our gaze the low and squalid cunning, treachery, the hypocrisy, and the devilry which have always been and always will be at the bottom of the Scotchman's soul, and Macduff puts the coping stone on the structure of opprobrium by calling his countryman a hell-hound and a bloodier villain than terms can give him out, and assuring him that he will live to be the show and gaze o' the time:

> Painted upon a pole and underwrit,
> Here may you see the tyrant.

From Shakespeare it is an easy jump to Jonson, who helped to write a play which put the Scot in such bad plight that it had to be suppressed by the authorities. Then, of course, there is Samuel Johnson, LL.D., who hated the Scotch at large and by instinct. Johnson has enjoyed no little reputation for his animadversions upon Scotland. In bulk they are slight, but they are decidedly to the point. Boswell treasured them and put them into his book, and to Johnson was the glory. Boswell, it is true, was a Scotchman himself, and the fact that he has given us one of the most entertaining pieces of biography ever written is allowed to redound to the credit of Scotland. I never read the life, however, without feeling that Johnson must have written Boswell and that Boswell wrote Johnson's poems.

The next good hater of your Scotchman is Charles Lamb. Lamb, need one say, was Lamby, even in his hatreds. He had a

gentle heart and he never exerted himself to put down aught in malice, so that he called his feelings of contempt for Scotchmen an imperfect sympathy, and this is what he wrote:

"I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and, in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of truth. She presents no full front to

them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, are the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting; waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath—but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematisers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His

Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glimmering something in your presence, to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to anything that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousness, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he

orthodox?—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel?—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border land with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him, for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. 'A healthy book!' said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle—'did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book.' Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a

Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. ——. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked 'my beauty' (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)—when he very gravely assured me that 'he had considerable respect for my character and talents' (so he was pleased to say), 'but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions.' The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to disconcert him. Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm as annunciate it. They do, indeed, appear to have such a love of truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject

of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son, when four of them started up at once to inform me that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.' An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely, their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage to the margin.[1]

"The tediousness of these people is certainly provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one

[1] There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, but at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gesture peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable.—Jonathan Swift, *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation.*

another! In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot, even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your 'imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses'; and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him. Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven for his delineation of Rory and his companion upon their first introduction to our metropolis. Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's *History* compared with *his* continuation of it. What if the historian had continued *Humphrey Clinker?*" [1]

I reproduce this estimate with the utmost satisfaction. The irony of the "imperfect intellects" passage will not be understood by

[1] Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia.*

dull Donald; indeed, he will in all probability take the passage seriously and quote it against me, but he is welcome. And on the whole I think that Lamb's view of the Scot is almost as acute as that of Dr. Robertson Nicoll himself. Nobody can doubt after reading the foregoing that Lamb saw in the Scotchman a crass and plantigrade person, incapable of comprehending the inexplicit and as devoid of true imagination as a brick. Lamb's notion of the Scot's incapacity for humour also chimes with that of Sidney Smith, who, as all men know, was of opinion that if you would have a Scotchman see a joke it is necessary to perform a surgical operation on him.[1]

Last of all, though perhaps brightest and best of them, who have lifted up their voices in the unmasking of the Scot, we must take

[1] Mr. Spielman has assured us that seventy-five per cent. of the jokes accepted from outsiders by *Punch* come from Scotland; this, however, only tends to show that Lamb and Smith knew what they were talking about, for it is everywhere admitted that if you want humour, you must make a point of avoiding *Punch*.

Mr. W. E. Henley. In an entirely just and reasonable essay on Burns, Mr. Henley made a passing reference to the poor living, lewd, grimy, free-spoken, ribald old Scots peasant-world. For this choice collocation of adjectives he was rewarded with many Scottish thwacks. That the old Scots peasant-world was everything that Mr. Henley said of it no person of sense will gainsay, and that the Scots peasant-world of to-day is, if anything, worse, is evident from the remark of one of Mr. Henley's Scottish critics, who says:

"We challenge Mr. Henley, *et hoc genus omne*, to disprove the fact that the record of crime, immorality, loose living in every parish wherein Burns resided, shows less by one half — by fifty to seventy per cent. — in that Burns epoch than it does in the same parishes to-day."

Mr. Henley has brought such a swarm of bees round his bonnet by a simple and quite tolerant bit of criticism, that to venture on anything in the way of plain talk about the Scotch might well appal the stoutest. The

worthy Dr. John D. Ross, editor of the *Burns Almanac* and sundry other compilations of a fatuously Burnsite character, has collected some of the diatribes against Mr. Henley into a volume which he calls *Henley and Burns*. Like everything else that comes out of Scotland, this volume gives the Scotchman away at all points. For example, it is made quite plain that Mr. Henley's essay, a purely critical venture, was regarded in Scotland as a base attempt to pull down the cash value of early editions of Burns's poetry. Dr. Ross's volume opens with the following oracular sentence: "Lovers of Burns will rejoice to learn from the large price paid this week for a Kilmarnock edition, that despite the criticism of Mr. W. E. Henley in the Centenary edition, there are as yet no signs that the poet's popularity is on the wane," and this brilliant commercialist adds: "Rightly or wrongly, Scotsmen will cling to the Burns' superstition, and will be the better for it. At an important book sale in Edinburgh this week, a Kilmarnock first edition in an apparently perfect

state of preservation, fetched the remarkable price of 545 guineas. The highest price ever before given for a copy of this edition, mutilated, however, and in inferior condition, was £120. Such a figure is undoubtedly a fancy price. The book is very rare, and to the bibliophile rarity is an all-important consideration in estimating value. But the popularity of the poet, the admiration of the uncritical, as Mr. Henley would put it, has helped to magnify the price of the book, and the critic's depreciation has had no effect on the market." What in the name of all that is Burnsy does this gentleman mean?

Again, in another paper headed "A Critic Scarified," the scarifier takes Mr. Henley to task for saying that "the Scots peasant . . . fed so cheaply that even on high days and holidays his diet (as set forth in the *Blithsome Bridal*) consisted largely in preparations of meal and vegetables and what is technically known as 'offal.'" To which Dr. Ross's scarifier retorts, "The author is happily addressing ignorant Southrons, not even

'half-read' Scots. However, it need not be imagined that Mr. Henley can translate the Scots language of the poem he refers to, else he would not assert that the viands specified in it are such common fare, consisting as they did of six different soups, eight varieties of fish (including shell-fish), six varieties of flesh (roasts, salted meat, nolt feet, haggis, tripe, sheep's head), three kinds of bread (oaten, barley, and wheaten), cheese, new ale, and brandy." On the face of it there is here a mighty deal of offal to precious little sound meat. If nolt feet, haggis, tripe, and sheep's head are not offal in Scotland, they are certainly reckoned in that category in England.

We shall return to Dr. Ross's scarifier in a chapter on "The Bard." Meanwhile, let us note that the best English writers have agreed that the Scotchman is, at best, not quite an angel of light. They have looked on him with the eye of calm perception, and they have found him seriously wanting. That he is a savage and a barbarian by blood, a free-

booter by heredity, a dullard, a braggart, and in short, a Scotchman, cannot be doubted. The testimony is all against him, and until he mends his ways it will continue to be against him.

III

THE POW-WOW MEN

It is the Scotchman's boast that the Scotchman has always figured portentously in the councils of the civilised nations. In France, in Germany, and even in unbeautiful Russia, Scotchmen have established themselves and at time and time risen to positions of considerable political power. And if we are to credit Dr. Hill Burton, this has always been an excellent thing for the nations concerned. According to Dr. Burton, if the Scotch did not entirely build up the France of the Middle Ages they had a mighty big finger in the process, and we are asked to believe by the same authority that it is the strain of Scotch blood in the veins of the French which has assisted very materially in

making the fortunes of that singularly fascinating and ingenious people.[1] The subject is a large one, and much that is edifying has been written about it, not only by Scotchmen, but by various foreign authors. On the whole, perhaps, Europe has not done so badly with her Scots, the reason being that she never allowed them to be any Scotcher than she could help, and turned them out the minute they became aggressive. In England, however, the more Scotch and the more aggressive the Scot becomes the more we seem to like him. At the present moment England is virtually being run by the Scotch. In the House of Commons the Leader of the Government—and practically the autocrat of

[1] "It may be surely counted not without significance among ethnical phenomena that, though France has all along shown in her language the predominance of the Latin race, three infusions of northern blood had been successively poured into the country: first, the Franks; then the Normans; and, lastly, the Scots. It seems not unreasonable that these helped to communicate to the vivacity and impetuosity of the original race those qualifications of enterprise and endurance which were needed to make up the illustrious history of France."—*The Scot Abroad.*

the Assembly—is the Right Honourable Arthur James Balfour, a philosopher from Scotland, who is so Scotch that he plays golf. And the Leader of the Opposition, save the mark! of an Opposition which, in a constitution like the British, carries upon its shoulders the heaviest responsibilities, is Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, also a Scotchman, and if the truth must be told, a dullard. And in the way of a third party, which will imperialise with the Government and cackle of reform with the Opposition, we have the Liberal Leaguers, headed by that proud chieftain of the pudding race—the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosebery. So that at the front of each of the three great political forces of Britain—the forces which, when all is said, mean everything to Britain as a nation—there stands firm and erect some sort of a Caledonian. Such a condition of things has never existed in England before, and in the light of recent political happenings it is devoutly to be hoped that it will never exist again. Since Mr. Balfour and Sir Henry

Campbell-Bannerman came into the offices they hold, England has been going steadily down-hill. At no period in her history have her enemies been so thick on the ground and so exultant and sure of themselves as they are at present, and at no period in her history has her prestige been at so low an ebb. Politically she has come to count as a little less than France and more than Spain. Formerly she led the nations—now she is content to walk humbly in line with them. Formerly she led the band, now she is merely third trombone player. Formerly, if she went to war, it was with nations of ponderability and for high principles; until the other day, she was draining her best blood and getting rid of one and a half millions of money weekly in a struggle with a handful of freebooters, got up and fomented largely in the interests of the children of Israel. At the time of writing Consols are at 94 and the Income Tax is *1s. 2d* in the pound, which shows what managers the Scotch are. Also Government, in so far as Government means the steady development

of the higher interests of the state at home and in the colonies, is at a dead standstill. The march of reform has been checked. Progress in the wide sense of the term is no more thought of. The legislative mill grinds heavily along and the grist amounts to nothing; in the seats of the mighty,—in the seats of Benjamin Disraeli and William Ewart Gladstone,—there blandly smiles Balfour and dodders Campbell-Bannerman. Mr. Balfour, golfer, and, for aught I know to the contrary, curler and hammer-putter, plays what he is pleased to call the game. Now the game is no new thing. Practically it is a development of that childish pastime known as "Jack's on his Island." On Mr. Balfour's island grows the green bay tree of power, and to live snugly under the shade of that tree, no matter what comes, is, in the view of Mr. Balfour, the game. It is with him a question of what can I do for England, having due regard to the exigencies of the game? Hence does he seek and bring along young talent. Having found your young talent,

you must make quite sure, not of its talentedness, but of its unwavering disposition to play the game. Will it be loyal to the Balfour? Can you depend upon it to stick by the Balfour though the heavens fall and it thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves? Anything that will subscribe to the Test Act of the Balfour is young talent. Hence it comes to pass that at the War Office we have had that shallow, dandy Wyndham. He is a *protégé* of the Balfour, even as the Balfour is the nephew of his uncle. And he plays the game. When matters at the War Office became too vasty for him he was shovelled by the Balfour into the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland. Even the Balfour and his friends are fain to admit that Mr. Wyndham has done no more for Ireland than he did for the War Office. Yet he plays the game, and so does the Balfour, and everything is right as right can be. In Mr. Wyndham's old place at the War Office we have that excellent dabbler, Mr. Brodrick. Mr. Brodrick, like the House of Lords, has always been exceedingly

busy doing nothing and doing it very well. Periodically he stands on his hind legs in the Commons and trots out tremendous schemes, all of which end pleasantly in smoke. The rottenness of the British Army is no affair of his; it was rotten when he first made its acquaintance—it will be just as rotten when he leaves Pall Mall. Underneath the terrific expenditure necessitated by the war there are jobs and scandals of the gravest sort, and Mr. Brodrick knows nothing about them. His business is to vindicate the characters of fribbling officers and gentlemen, to lay on praise of the British soldier with a trowel, and to assure the world at large that the persons who have brought charges against army contractors have brought those charges simply because the contractors' names are un-English and consequently not pleasing to the British commercial mind. He it is, in short, who allows himself to be put up as a sort of sand-bag in front of the Government, guaranteed to ward off all attacks by simply sitting tight and remaining as dumb as an

oyster. He was no doubt told when he took up his present dignities that the Balfour would expect him to play the game, and, being a good man, he is playing it.

For the rest of them one man only needs be discussed. He is a Birmingham man, Joseph Chamberlain by name. The Balfour took him over from the other side, and, in spite of all his faults, gave him a warm Scotch welcome and set him high in the Balfourian councils. From that day to this the Balfour has looked upon him askance and wished him anywhere but where he is; but the Balfour is Scotch and he lacks the pluck to get rid of the Birmingham gentleman, because it might cost them something. The Birmingham gentleman, knowing the Balfour to be Scotch, defies him.

On the other side, as we have said, there is poor, dear old Sir 'Enry of the double-barrelled Scotch name, which the economical have reduced to C.-B. On the whole, C.-B. is about as pathetic a figure as one can find

in history; he is the type and flower of your Scotchman lifted to the pinnacles. Sooner or later he was bound to make a mess of it, and, lacking the blood of Liverpool which delayed Mr. Gladstone's downfall for so many years, he made it sooner. From the first he has been the laughing-stock, not only of the Government, and, for that matter, of Europe, but also of his own party. He lolls enthroned on the front Opposition Bench, shoulder to shoulder with trusty lieutenants who never obey him, and backed up by political friends who put no trust in him. On the day that he took the party by the nose, the party dropped off, and all that remains to C.-B. is the nose. To this relic of ambition realised he clings with true Scottish pertinacity. He has wrapped it up in a napkin and hidden it; probably it will never again be found, inasmuch as C.-B. is invariably too bewildered to know what he is doing. Harcourt bewilders him, Asquith bewilders him, Morley bewilders him, and latterly there has come that crowning bewilderment of them all, Lord Rosebery.

C.-B. will go bewildered through whatever remains to him of his term of office, and when Liberalism takes thought to get properly rid of him, he will be more bewildered still. He is too Scotch to perceive that nobody wants him, and if he saw it he is too Scotch to go.

As for Lord Rosebery, the less said about him the better. He is of Scotch stock, and he had the good fortune to be born of an English mother. But the Scotch blood in him, the Scotch ineptitudes, the Scotch lack of force prevail. He does everything by turns and nothing long. Like Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, he failed as a leader. The statesman in him does not possess him; it was a mere detail and a small one. As an active politician he had to look around for a model upon whom to shape himself. No Scotchman can make the smallest sort of mark, whether it be in politics or anything else, without such a model. And in his middle and later periods, at any rate, Lord Rosebery has modelled himself upon Mr.

Augustine Birrell, and as is usual with Scotchmen, he has practically ousted Mr. Birrell from the position of wit-monger to the Liberal party. In the House of Commons Mr. Birrell made a reputation, not because he was a statesman or an orator, but because he had a habit of firing off a kind of loose wit which passes in the House of Commons for epigram. When he spoke, the House was sure to be in a roar within the half-hour, and one or two of the phrases he made became texts for leader-writers and made good "quote" in Liberal speeches. With true Scottish enterprise, Lord Rosebery determined to be a second and a greater Birrell. He has succeeded. In the House of Lords he enjoys a reputation for saying things. He is also credited, as was Mr. Birrell, with a nice taste in letters. And, like Mr. Birrell, he is not infrequently asked down to Little Puddlington in order to help in the celebration of the centenaries of Little Puddlington's locally born geniuses. He dare no more make a serious speech, either in the House of Lords

or at Little Puddlington, than he dare call Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman out of his name. Fireworks are expected from him, and if they were not forthcoming, there would be no Lord Rosebery. He passes for a great empire builder, and along with the worthy Dr. Jameson he figures among the executors of the late Mr. Rhodes's will. He is the founder and President of the New Liberal League, which will have nothing to do with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, but his personal friendship with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman continues, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is certainly not mentioned in Mr. Cecil Rhodes's will. In effect, Lord Rosebery amounts to little more than nothing. The Liberal League, which was to make a great to-do in most matters appertaining to Liberalism and government, fizzled like a bad squib for three or four weeks, and then Lord Rosebery went to Nice. That is exactly the man. When his time comes, when the country wants him, when Liberalism wants him,—when, in fact, anybody

wants him,—he says, "Yes, yes, I am here," and immediately starts either for Nice or Epsom. Scotch modesty overcomes him. Scotch caution says, "You know you are a fool; be careful to avoid ultimate risks." Scotch cowardice says, "If you go into battle you may get hurt. Nice is much nicer." In newspaper columns Lord Rosebery's speeches read *admirably*, providing you do not study them too closely, but any person who has been present in the House of Lords what time his Lordship was on his legs must have gone away with shattered illusions. Even as C.-B. stutters and blunders and grabs for his words in the circumambient air, so Lord Rosebery cackles and sentimentalises. In appearance he is of about the build and body of a draper. His voice is that of an anæmic curate. There are always tears in it at the wrong places, and on the whole it makes you laugh. And having spoken, he trots out like a Scotch sparrow, and with hat a-tilt and arms under his coat-tails poises himself perkily on the steps of the entrance

to St. Stephen's Hall, and waits for his carriage to take him off to the station, and so to Epsom or Nice. On the turf his reputation is exactly the same in kind as his reputation in politics. He is as variable as the shade and as changeable as the moons. Sometimes he does brilliant things, but he cannot keep them up. In brief he is half Scotch and half soda.

It is to these redoubtable Scotch persons that England is looking for good government, and hence it comes to pass that of late she has had to govern herself. Out of Scotchmen you can get little that is business-like and little that is dignified, at any rate where statesmanship is concerned. Their ambitions are illimitable, but their powers of execution not worth counting. They will fight from behind cover to more or less bitter and ignominious ends, but, like the Boer farmers, to whom in many large respects they bear the most striking resemblances, they never know when they are beaten, and their warfare deteriorates into mere brigandism and

filibustering. When Britain was ruled by Englishmen she wore the epithet Great by good right ; since she has been ruled by Scotchmen she has well nigh lost it.

IV

THE SCOT IN JOURNALISM

We have seen on the word of Dr. Robertson Nicoll that once upon a time it was the ambition of every Scotch youth to become a professor. Once upon a time, too, and one does not need to quote authority for it, every second child in kilts was devoted by his parents to the ministry, and did, no doubt, sooner or later attain to that admirable office. But latterly the supply of Scotch professors has been a good deal bigger than the demand, and it has dawned upon the slow Scottish intellect that £70 a year and a manse is after all not exactly one of the prizes of life. Therefore your stern, calculating Scotch peasant has during late years dedicated his son to the practice and service

of journalism. Now journalism, though the Fourth estate, is the last of the professions. The journalist who is making £500 a year,—at any rate, the Scotch journalist who is making £500 a year,—is the exception and not the rule. Still, £500 a year, or, for that matter, £250 a year, is wealth to your average Scot, who, nine times out of ten, comes hitherward from a district where persons who once had a sovereign in their possession are looked upon with awe and reverence. Furthermore, journalism suits the Scot because it is a profession into which you can crawl without inquiry as to your qualifications, and because it is a profession in which the most middling talents will take you a long way. The reporting staffs and sub-editorial staffs of both the London and provincial journals can, I think, boast a decidedly decent leaven of Scotchmen. In Fleet Street, if you do not happen to possess a little of the Doric, you are at some disadvantage in comprehending the persons with whom you are compelled to talk. "Hoo arre

ye the noo?" is the conventional greeting in most newspaper offices. Also a large proportion of the persons who come up the stairs on personal business which usually turns out to be the personal business of the persons, and resolves itself into a request for reviewing, or an offer to do another man's work at a cheap rate, are very Scotch indeed; and while they drop the Doric word with fair success, they cannot for the life of them get out of the Doric idiom and the Doric accent. Armed with a letter of introduction from Professor McMoss—whom you do not know—and with a sheaf of dog's eared certificates picked up at Scotch universities, they descend upon you with the air of men who know for a surety that you are dying for their services, and when they go out, after wasting an altogether unnecessary amount of your time and temper, it is with black looks and a burning conviction that you refused to employ them because you know them to be so clever that they might supplant you in your own chair.

Ten years ago it was the man from Oxford or Cambridge that was considered the essential thing in journalism. Nowadays the attitude of newspaper proprietors in want of a smart man amounts to "No university man need apply." I do not think that we are very far from the day when the tune will be changed to "No Scotchman need apply." Numerically the Scotch journalist is unquestionably strong. He possesses, too, certain solid qualities which are undoubtedly desirable in a journalist. For example, he is punctual, cautious, dogged, unoriginal, and a born galley-slave. You can knock an awful lot of work out of him, and no matter how little you pay him he may be depended upon to sustain the dignity of the office in the matter of clothes, external habits of life, and a dog-like devotion to the hand that feeds him and the foot that kicks him. In short, he is a capital routine man, and if you have a journal which you wish to maintain on the ancient lines of stodge and flat-footedness, the Scotchman does you admirably. But it

is impossible to get away from the fact that the vogue of the stolid, arid, stereotyped, sleepy sort of journalism which satisfied the last generation is rapidly going to pieces. The contemporary world wants and will have what it chooses to call the "live" journalist, and the Scotchman who is a live journalist to the extent of evolving anything bright or subtle or suggestive or original has yet to be found. At the present moment he is managing to keep himself alive by imitation. As a plagiarist of ideas, necessity has made him a master. He knows that the reign of dulness is coming to an end, and that the auld wife journalism in whose benevolent presence he has prosed and prosed for so many years, is even now in her dotage and cannot last much longer. So that he has taken thought and determined to aim higher. What man has done, a Scot can do. It is not given to him to be witty and brilliant and unhackneyed on a little oatmeal, but, thank Heaven! he can always play sedulous ape, and sedulous ape it shall be.

These remarks, of course, apply only to the lower reaches of journalism, to the sub-editorial, reportorial, contributorial, and contents bill making departments. When it comes to a question of editors, matters assume quite a different complexion. A Scotch editor is, as a rule, a sight for gods and little fishes. Dr. Nicoll will tell you that the Scot makes a good servant but a bad master. This is the truth. Mercifully, you can count the Scotch editors of London on the fingers of one hand. So far as I am aware, there are only two of them—Dr. Robertson Nicoll and Dr. Nicol Dunn. Of one of them—him of the *Morning Post*—you hear little, save that he is a good fellow of no great parts, and that he holds at his office a daily reception for raw, unlicked Scotch youths who are come newly over the border and crave the benefits of his advice and assistance. Politically, his paper can scarcely be considered a power; its views on most questions are of no great consequence, but it appears to have an enormous circulation among the blue-blooded and

the wealthy, whose doings it chronicles with touching fidelity and regularity, and without the smallest reference to the notoriously independent guinea stamp of Dr. Nicol Dunn's favourite poet. The other Dr. Nicoll is a horse of another colour. He is all for Nonconformity and the appraisement of healthy and improving literature. Each of his papers is a paper for the bosom of the family and the ministers' Monday, and warranted to do all that can be done for the unco' guid of North Britain, for all Scottish writers of whatever degree of merit or demerit, for Dr. Nicoll's English admirers, and Dr. Nicoll himself. On every issue of these remarkable publications Dr. Nicoll stamps the impress of his own engaging personality. I have heard it said by an admirer of his that he is three men—a Scotch divine, a judge of letters, and a journalist who never forgets that his main business in life is to sell papers. These three Dr. Nicolls are, I am assured, quite different persons, inasmuch as the Doctor possesses the blessed gift of detachment and thinks

nothing of dictating an article on the genius of Dr. Parker, a kindly appreciation of the latest gory detective story, and a set of Sunday afternoon verses or so in a single morning. Of his lucubrations as a divine I shall say nothing, because I have not studied them. As a judge of letters, however, I take him to be the most catholic scribbler in Europe. Any author who is doing well—that is to say, any author whose record of sales entitles him to be considered a success—may always reckon on a large hospitality in Dr. Nicoll's journals, and will always find Dr. Nicoll and his merry men beaming round the corner, hat in hand. It is a case of what would you like, sir? all the time. Are you spending your holiday cruising on the blue Mediterranean in the Duchess of Puttleham's yacht? Very good. Paragraph in the column signed "Man of Kent," with a delicate reference to your last great novel. Have you projects? Equally good. "Mr. So-and-So is, I understand, hard at work on his next great novel." Will your new book, 30,000 copies of which

have been sold before the day of publication, make its appearance on April 1? Capital. Send us portraits of yourself at all ages from three months to the present day, pictures of the modest tenement in which you were born, and of your present town house and little place in the country, and, bless your heart, we will do the rest. Do people say that the great novel, of which you have sold fifty million copies in England and America, is a pot-boiler and a stunner? Dear, dear me! You have our heartiest sympathies, sir, and if you would like to vindicate your character as an artist in a couple of pages of the *British Weekly*, why, my dear sir, we are at your service. I do not say that there is any terrific harm in this species of enterprise; that it pleases the mass of mankind and therefore sells papers goes without saying. On the other hand, it is quite subversive of the best interests of letters, and therefore I am inclined to think—and I set it down with great sorrow—that Dr. Nicoll, in spite of his devotional connection is, if he have any force in

letters at all, a distinctly dubious and undesirable force.

As an example of what the *Bookman* really can do when it has a mind, let us quote the following review of a book by Mr. Le Gallienne:

"Mr. Le Gallienne is the Dick Whittington of song. His story reminds us of that other Richard, who, one summer morning many hundreds of years ago, sat listening to the bells of distant London. The one carried his little all tied up in a handkerchief slung to the end of a stick; the other came to London to seek his fortune with a sheaf of manuscript poems in his pocket and any number of poems singing in his head. Now, Mr. Le Gallienne is a figure in 'society,' and lives in a beautiful house crowded with costly *bric-à-brac* and valuable books; but I like to think sometimes of the sloping-roofed room, nestling under the gables of one of the most picturesque buildings left in London—quaint old Staple's Inn—which was his first home in the great city.

"It was in just such a room that one might picture Chatterton—rough-hewn oak beams above, uneven oak flooring below, and in front a 'magic casement' 'opening upon the foam'—not of 'perilous seas'—but of perilous streets, where the black tides of hurrying human creatures never ceases [*sic*] to ebb and flow. Here were his bed, his books, and his papers. Here, too, though shillings were probably scarcer than sovereigns are now, were the flowers, which the extravagant tenant of the prophet's chamber was never too poor to deny himself—the flowers which were the inspiration of many of his songs. And here, on a little stove in a corner, he would himself boil the water with which to brew for his visitor the tea or coffee that he would hand round with the ease and grace of a duke dispensing hospitality in his castle.

"I have been betrayed into this personal reminiscence by reading how 'Love, a poor poet in need of a room for his bed and his rhymes,' and 'Beauty, a little blue-eyed girl who loved him,' transformed into a seventh

heaven a single seventh-story room which they had rented, for surely 'Love' stands for Mr. Le Gallienne himself, and 'Beauty' for the sweet-faced young wife with dove-like eyes and dove-like voice, whose loss has been the great sorrow of the poet's life. It was in a beautiful idyll called *A Seventh-Story Heaven* that I read of the transformation, and this brings me to the fact with which I started or ought to have started—that Mr. Le Gallienne has published a new book. In other words, he has set open the door of another House of Welcome on the literary highway. And surely 't were as hard, on a glaring summer's noon, for a tired and thirsty traveller to pass by some ancient hostelry, through the ivy-hung porch of which he sees, lying back in cool shadow, a quaint stone-paven nook with a glimpse of green lawn and box-bordered flower beds beyond, as it were for the literary wayfarer to turn aside from a volume titled like Mr. Le Gallienne's, *The Prose Fancies of a Poet!* Could a more alluring sign be set aswing before the doors of

any literary House of Refreshment? Nor when we have entered are we disappointed by the bill of fare which is put before us. 'A Seventh-Story Heaven,' 'Spring by Parcel Post,' 'A Poet in the City,' 'Brown Roses,' 'Death and Two Friends,' 'A Seaport in the Moon'—here surely is a list which might stir the imagination even of unimaginative folk.

"The score or so of 'Fancies' which form the volume are, as was only to be expected, of very varying merit. To the opening idyll, 'A Seventh-Story Heaven,' reference has already been made. Mr. Le Gallienne's friend and neighbour, Mr. Grant Allen, a delightful naturalist and essayist, whom society by her neglect has turned into a thrower into her midst of Nihilistic bombs in the guise of novels, could bear witness to the fact that nests are built in stranger places, but surely never did love-birds find such strange quarters for their home as this eyrie at the top of a building, the ground floor of which was a sailor's tavern. But dingy and unlovely as the spot may be, it is made beautiful for us

in Mr. Le Gallienne's page as the scene of a love-story so exquisitely told, and so tremulous with tender pathos, that we can only compare it to the work of the gentle Elia.

"I cannot say as much for the second Fancy, whimsically entitled 'Spring by Parcel Post,' for it is surely an error of taste which every admirer of Mr. Le Gallienne's genius must regret. 'The big Dutch hyacinths,' he writes, 'are already shamelessly *enceinte* with their buxom waxen blooms, so fat and fragrant—(one is already delivered of a fine blossom. Well, that is a fine baby, to be sure! says [*sic*] the other hyacinths with babes no less bonny under their own green apron—all waiting for the doctor Sun).'

"I wonder if this offends the taste of my readers as much as it offends mine. Mr. Le Gallienne may quote science and physiology against me, but I must confess that in regard to children and flowers I like to keep my very thoughts free from the smirch of sex, though I concede and contend that the smirch is entirely of man's, not of God's making. But in

the passage I have quoted there is a certain coarseness of associations which is painful in connection with the purest and most perfect thing on God's earth—a flower. It was to me as if hot hands were tampering with the petals of a lily. The air seemed to become close as I read, and it was not until I had had a dip—as into cool spring water—into the flower-poems of Burns and Wordsworth that I could go on with my reading of *Prose Fancies*.

"Let us turn the page and forget that one of the most delicately-minded of living poets, whose work has hitherto been distinguished for exquisite fancy and excellent taste, should so far have 'lost himself' as to have written it.

"*Variations upon Whitebait* is a caprice as skilful as Rossetti's famous sonnet, *A Match with the Moon*. It is a very curiosity in similes, and though Mr. Le Gallienne will toss you a fresh and apt simile for every fish upon your fork, though he introduce as many variations as a pianist introduces into *Home, Sweet Home*, yet the essay is not all variation,

but has a pretty story running like the thread of a tune throughout.

"As for the 'Letter to an Unsuccessful Literary Man,' I would suggest that it be lithographed in order that the successful author may use it as a form with which to reply to the uninvited correspondent. If only Mr. Le Gallienne could induce amateurs to read this letter instead of writing letters of their own to that most baited of beings, the professional author, what a boon he would confer upon his fellow craftsmen! The essay, *On Loving One's Enemies*, is scarcely written in the spirit which its title and its protestations of charity might lead us to suppose. It strikes me as somewhat self-conscious and defiant; but *Death and Two Friends* contains some really signal work. For the gem of the book, however, we must turn to *A Seaport in the Moon*. This and the opening chapter, *A Seventh-Story Heaven*, are in themselves worth the modest sum which the publishers ask for the volume. *A Seaport in the Moon* is an exquisitely beautiful fancy. Mr. Le

Gallienne was in the right mood when he wrote it, and when he is in the mood he is a magician. His page glows like a painter's palette with rich colours, and the pictures come and go before us like sunset pageant."

Apart from the delicious Scotch snobbery which jumps at you from every line of this admirable piece of criticism, and leaving altogether out of the question the downright vulgarity and ineptitude of it, one would like to know what the *Bookman* would say if Mr. Le Gallienne published a similar book tomorrow. At the time when this review was published, Mr. Le Gallienne was in the zenith of his somewhat slender and rarefied popularity. He had captured the heart of Kensington with dainty vacuity. His locks were curled and perfumed; he figured prettily and replied to the toast of letters at the dinners of literary clubs, and was the delicate high priest of a little school of hot pressed poetry and vapid prose. The *Bookman*, of course, was bound to salute him with a chaste appreciation. Since then the world has gone on

and left Mr. Le Gallienne somewhat behind it, also Mr. Le Gallienne himself has settled in America and cut off his hair. No more does he publish the booklet that takes the town; no longer does he write of the "Woman's Third" or sigh over the deception of tender-hearted schoolgirls, who have provided one with a sonnet. In short, his laurel hangs dustily on a nail at the "Bodley Head," and the raven locks that once bore it have probably by this time gone to help in the making of a mess of honest builders' mortar. So that the *Bookman* knows him no more.

From the issue of the *Bookman* which contains the review above quoted I take a couple of "news notes."

"Mr. J. M. Barrie has finished a book on his mother, which will be entitled *Margaret Ogilvy*. It is perhaps the most beautiful and exquisite piece of work he has yet accomplished. It is not a biography in the ordinary sense, but gives aspects and incidents of his mother's life in the style which Mr. Barrie's readers know, keeping close throughout

to facts. The volume will be published in this country by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, and in America by Messrs. Scribner."

"Mr. S. R. Crockett's new novel is to be entitled *Lochinvar*. Some eminent critics who have had the privilege of reading the portion already written are enthusiastic in their praise of the work. It is said to be more in the manner of *The Lilac Sun-Bonnet* than some of Mr. Crockett's more recently published novels."

So much for the Scotch journalist.

V

THRUMS AND DRUMTOCHTY

The Scot abroad, or at any rate the Scot that one knows and loves in London, is a creature so winning and delectable in character that one proceeds to the study of the Scot at home with anticipations of the most pleasurable kind. The best way to study the Scot at home is, of course, to consult the works of those eminent Scottish writers, Dr. J. M. Barrie and Dr. Ian Maclaren, with occasional reference to Dr. S. R. Crockett. Dr. Barrie and Dr. Maclaren (otherwise Watson) have been at pains to portray for us, with what Dr. Nicoll would no doubt call loving and exquisite fidelity, the peoples and manners and customs of two Scotch parishes, named respectively Thrums and Drumtochty.

Both, one gathers, are the prettiest, most charitable, and most God-fearing communities to be found upon this globe of sinful continents. Butter will not melt, and ginger is not hot in the mouth either at Thrums or Drumtochty. The various books of the chronicles of that earthly paradise, Thrums, are of formidable number, and I do not profess to have read more than five of them. But I have read enough to know all that I want to know about Thrums. Here, it seems, "twenty years ago, hundreds of weavers lived and died Thoreaus 'ben the hoose without knowing it." Here also lived "the dear old soul who originally induced me to enter the Auld Licht Kirk" and was "as sweet and pure a woman as I ever knew"; also Tammy Mealmaker, who died a bachelor and "had been soured in his youth by disappointment in love of which he spoke but seldom," also Tibbie McQuhattay, "at whom you may smile, but, ah! I know what she was at the sick-bedside"; also Whinny Webster, who ate peppermints in church, and

when detected in the act "gave one wild scream"; and "straightway became a God-fearing man"; also Hendry Munn, "who was the only man in Thrums who did not quake when the minister looked at him"; also Jess McQumpha, who "sat at the window for twenty years or more, looking at the world as through a telescope," and who "was possessed of a sweet, untarnished soul"; also Leeby, who "died in the back end of the year I have been speaking of"; and Jamie, who did the home-coming, and gaed somebody "sic a look"; and last, but not least, in childishness, the Little Minister and Babbie. For blithering sentiment of the cheapest and most obvious sort, these personages have certainly never been equalled. The whole tone of the Thrums chronicles is as bathotic as it could be made even by a Scotchman, and wherever one turns one finds Mr. Barrie trotting out creatures of a sentiment so slobbery that it would be eschewed even by the scribbling, simpering misses at a seminary. And at Drumtochty,

need one say, Dr. Ian Maclaren introduces you to the same set of silly figures. Dr. Maclaren, it is true, put in the front of his show a cunning Scotch farmer whose attempts to cheat his landlord, the worthy doctor,—parson as he is,—would evidently have you smile, but all the rest of his people are rare and radiant pieces of virtue, clothed round in Scotch flesh and sandy hair, and speaking the most uncompromising dialect. For example, there is Mrs. Elspeth Macfadyen. This lady's claim to greatness is not exactly of a moral kind, being based on the circumstance that she obtained a penny above the market price for her butter. All the farmers' wives of the Scotch romances invariably do this. Even Dr. Crockett's lady of the lilac sunbonnet made the best butter in three parishes. The butter woman, however, is not intended to count, so that we will let her go by, and proceed duly to note the heavenly dispositions of the rest of the Drumtochtyans. In the first place, there is Baxter of Burnbrae. Burnbrae, it seems, "had

to make the choice that has been offered to every man since the world began"; in other words, he had to choose between losing his farm and changing his kirk.

"'Well, Baxter,' said the factor in his room next day, 'your offer is all right in the money, and we'll soon settle the building. By the way, I suppose you've thought over that kirk affair, and will give your word to attend the Established Church, eh?'

"'Ye may be sure that A've gien a' ye said ma best judgment, and there's naething I wudna dae to be left in Burnbrae, but this thing ye ask A canna grant.'

"'Why not?' and the factor, lounging in his chair, eyed Burnbrae contemptuously as he stood erect before him. 'My groom tells me that there is not a grain of difference between all those kirks in Scotland, and that the whole affair is just downright bad temper, and I believe he's right.'

"'A wudna say onything disrespectfu', sir, but it's juist possible that naither you nor your groom ken the history o' the Free

Church; but ye may be sure sensible men and puir fouk dinna mak' sic sacrifices for bad temper.'"

Which is exceeding good of Burnbrae, if a little too bad of Dr. Maclaren.

And our excellent Scotch author makes Burnbrae conclude the interview thus: "'Sir,' he said, with great solemnity, 'I pray God you may never have such sorrow as you have sent on my house this day.'" I should very much doubt whether there is a Scotchman in all Scotland who would not have made quite a different ending with much fist-shaking and calling down of curses in it.

Well, in the result, Burnbrae does leave his farm; anyway, there is a sale, or as the Scotch elegantly term it, a roup. And what happens? Why, the neighbours—good, honest bodies—turn up in their thousands and buy in Burnbrae's farming stock at noble prices, bidding high for everything in order that Burnbrae may at least have a good roup. Meanwhile the minister of the kirk with which Burnbrae scorned to become a member

has communicated with the owner of the soil, the Earl of Kilspindie to wit, and to Burnbrae Kilspindie writes, "Meet me in Muirtown on Friday." On Friday, Burnbrae meets the Earl. They crack together of Burnbrae's son, the sergeant, who, like all the other Scotch sergeants of fiction, has just won the Victoria Cross. "'There will be no speaking to Mrs. Baxter now after this exploit of the sergeant's! When I read it on my way home I was as proud as if he had been my own son. It was a gallant deed, and well deserves the Cross. He'll be getting his commission some day. Lieutenant Baxter! That will stir the Glen, eh?'" Then they touch on the matter of the farm, and the tears come to Burnbrae's eyes. "'Athocht,' he said, 'when yir message cam, that maybe ye hed anither mind than yir factor, and wud send me back tae Jean wi' guid news in ma mooth.'

"'Gin it be yir wull that we flit, A'll mak nae mair complaint, an' there's nae bitterness in ma hert. But A wud like ye tae ken that it 'ill be a sair pairtin'.

"'For twa hundred years an' mair there's been a Baxter at Burnbrae and a Hay at Kilspindie; ane wes juist a workin' farmer, an' the other a belted earl, but gude freends an' faithfu'; an', ma Lord, Burnbrae wes as dear tae oor fouk as the castle wes tae yours.

"'A mind that day the Viscount cam' o' age, an' we gaithered tae wush him weel, that A saw the pictures o' the auld Hays on yir walls, an' thocht hoo mony were the ties that bund ye tae yir hame.

"'We haena pictures nor gowden treasures, but there's an auld chair at oor fireside, an' A saw ma grandfather in it when A wes a laddie at the schule, an' A mind him tellin' me that his grandfather hed sat in lang afore. It's no worth muckle, an' it's been often mended, but A'll no like tae see it carried oot frae Burnbrae.

"'There is a Bible, tae, that hes come doon, father tae son, frae 1690, and ilka Baxter hes written his name in it, an' "farmer at Burnbrae," but it'll no' be dune

again, for oor race 'ill be awa frae Burnbrae for ever.

"'Be patient wi' me, ma Lord, for it's the laist time we're like tae meet, an' there's anither thing A want tae say, for it's heavy on ma hert.

"'When the factor told me within this verra room that we maun leave, he spoke o' me as if A hed been a lawless man, an' it cut me mair than ony ither word.

"'Ma Lord, it's no' the men that fear their God that 'ill brak the laws, an' A ken nae Baxter that wes ither than a loyal man tae his King and country.

"'Ma uncle chairged wi' the Scots Greys at Waterloo, and A mind him tellin', when A wes a wee laddie, hoo the Hielanders cried oot, "Scotland for ever," as they passed.

"'A needna tell ye aboot ma brither, for he wes killed by yir side afore Sebastopol, and the letter ye sent tae Burnbrae is keepit in that Bible for a heritage.

"'A'll mention naething aither o' ma ain laddie, for ye've said mair than wud be richt

for me, but we coont it hard that when oor laddie hes shed his blude like an honest man for his Queen, his auld father and mither sud be driven frae the hame their forebears hed for seeven generations.' "

What a family! The sergeant with the V. C., ma uncle who chairged wi' the Scots Greys, and ma brither who wes killed by yir side afore Sebastopol, and, of course, the Bible has to be lugged in. What wonder that at this outburst of Scottish reticence, so to say, Lord Kilspindie rose to his feet. In the twinkling of a paragraph or two the shallow, monstrous, black-hearted English factor is, need one say, coming in for a bit of his Lordship's mind.

"'You'll reduce the rent to the old figure, and put in the name of John Baxter, and let it be for the longest period we ever give on the estate.'

"'But, Lord Kilspindie . . . I . . . did you know——'

"'Do as I command you without another word,' and his Lordship was fearful to behold."

Baxter goes home to his farm victor. The news goes down the Glen,—or up it as the case may be,—and the question arises as to what Baxter is going to do with the farm that has been denuded of live stock and implements, and before you can say Jack Robinson every man who has made a purchase at the Burnbrae roup is off to Burnbrae with his purchase and dumps it down and leaves it there, free, gratis, and for nothing.

Now the whole of this story is simply ridiculous. Even if one swallowed the English factor who had turned an old tenant out of his farm on a question of kirk; even if one swallowed the neighbourly bidding up at the roup (not to mention the Victoria Cross and the fighting uncle and brither), Dr. Maclaren cannot make us believe that a Scotchman would part freely and without price with anything that he had once bought. And what a reflection it is upon the dulness of the patient, resigned, and tear-stricken Burnbrae, that he did not have the presence of mind to address dear, good Earl of Kilspindie

before the roup came off! But had he done that, of course, Dr. Ian Maclaren could not have made his point as to the incredible generosity of the dwellers about Drumtochty.

But the Glen could boast much more remarkable men than Burnbrae. There is Drumsheugh, about as pale a martyr as a martyr-loving people could wish for. Drumsheugh passed in the Glen for a hard man and a miser, "a wratch that 'ill hae the laist penny in a bargain, and no spend a saxpence gin he can keep it." But Drumsheugh was sairly misjudged. He carried his tribble for mair than thirty year, and then unburdened himself of it over the whiskey to his friend, Dr. Maclure. "'It wes for anither A githered, an' as fast as A got the gear A gied it awa',' and Drumsheugh sprang to his feet, his eyes shining; 'it wes for love's sake A haggled an' schemed, an' stairved an' toiled, till A've been a byword at kirk an' market for nearness; A did it a', an' bore it a', for ma love, an' for . . . ma love A wud hae dune ten times mair.'" Naturally, and

the lady in the case was named Marget, the bonniest as weel as the noblest o' weemen (they all are). Well, Drumsheugh fell in love with Marget when she was in her bloom. With the true Scottish reticence, however, he omitted to mention his condition to the object of his affection, so that she went off quite properly and married a feckless person named Whinnie, who, being feckless, got himself into persistent holes for money, so that Whinnie and Marget were continually being threatened with the loss of their happy home, and all the time Drumsheugh, for love's sake, kept on sending money through his solicitors in the name of Whinnie's rich uncle in America. For thirty years Whinnie continued to be a drain on his purse, and Drumsheugh spake no word, but went on loving Marget all the time. Being made the recipient of this astonishing confidence, Maclure is for posting off to Marget right away, and she, good woman, posts as swiftly off to Drumsheugh. It is a case of ae fond kiss and dinna peety me, Marget; A've hed ma re-

ward, an' A'm mair than content; and we wind up with the biblical reflection that "They which shall be accounted worthy . . . neither marry nor are given in marriage . . . but are as the angels of God in Heaven"; which is all very pretty and all very Scotch, and all made to sell. We may note, however, that Drumsheugh did not stand alone in Drumtochty for his devotion to a lost love. The fetch is too easy and too safe for Dr. Maclaren to allow himself the use of it only once. There was a man in Drumtochty who had been counted a cynic and a railer against "merridge," even as Drumsheugh was accounted a miser. In the course of nature this man, Jamie Soutar, came to die. On his death bed he remarked to a friend, "'Wha sed A wes against merridge, Doctor Davidson?' and Jamie's face flushed. 'Did ever man or woman hear me speak lichtly o' the mystery o' love? The Glen hes thocht me an auld cankered bachelor, an' A've seen a lass leave her lad's side on the sicht o' me. Little they kent!'" And it transpires that "'forty-five

years syne A met . . . a lassie near Kildrummie, an' A cam tae love her aince and for ever, an' we hed . . . seeven evenin's thegither. When A cam the next day she wesna there, an' A hoddit amang the trees for a ploy; but it wes lang waitin', for she didna come, an' A gaed hame wi' fear in ma hert. . . .

"'A set aff tae her hoose, and ilka turn o' the road A lookit for Menie. Aince ma hert loupit in ma breist like a birdie in its cage, for a wumman cam' along the near road frae Kildrummie, but it wesna Menie.

"' When A saw her brither wi' his face tae Drumtochty, A kent, afore he said a word, that he wes seekin' me, an' that Menie was deid. Never a tear cam' that day tae ma een, an' he telt me, stannin' in the middle o' the road, where it begins tae gae doon the hill:

"'It wes her throat, an' the doctor wes feared frae the first day. The nicht she didna come she wes carried (delirious); she . . . said, "Jamie, Jamie," ower an' ower again, an' wanted tae rise.

"'Aboot daybreak she cam' tae hersel', and knew oor faces. "A'm deein'," she said, "'an' A didna keep ma tryst last nicht. It's ower late noo, an' A'll no see him on earth again.

"'Tell James Soutar that it wesna ma blame A failed, an' gie him ma Bible," an' a while aifter she said, "A'll keep the tryst wi' him some day," an' . . . that's a'.'"

After that, any child could tell you what Jamie's "last words" would be.

"'Menie,' he cried, suddenly, with a new voice, 'A've keepit oor tryst.'"

Heaven help us!

VI

BARBIE

From Thrums and Drumtochty the blest to Barbie, which is also in Scotland, may be fairly described as a far cry. In the beautiful communities conceived by Drs. Barrie and Maclaren the milk of human nature flows like a river; everybody lives, not for his or her foolish self, but for somebody else; everybody dies for somebody else; all bachelors are faithful to the sweethearts of their youth "for forty year and more"; all the women make the best butter in Galloway; all the girls are pretty and angelic of temperament, and, in short, Thrums and Drumtochty are little bits of heaven dropped on to the map of Scotland. But Barbie is not of heavenly origin in the least. The chronicles of Barbie

have been put into print for us by Mr. George Douglas, and he calls his book *The House with the Green Shutters*. If he had wanted a just title for it, he might very well have called it "The Unspeakable Scot." Nowhere in letters does there exist such an unsophisticated revelation of the minds and habits of a savage and barbarous people as is to be found in this book. It is fiction, of course; but it is that kind of fiction which has been written from observation, and is practically a human document. The Barbie crowd do not waste any time on little acts of kindness; there is not a man among them who cannot fairly be termed mean. If meanness were the only fault one might be able to put up with Barbie; but the inhabitants have graver failings. They are all dour; they are all bitter-hearted; they are all greedy; they are all merciless and full of the wickedest guile. Gourlay, who is the hero of the piece, counts among the most unpleasant persons one has ever met in a book. He has "the black glower in his een," and all the

Scotch qualities of envy, hatred, overweening pride, and tyranny find full expression in him. For years he has trampled the rest of Barbie under his feet, and all Barbie hates him. "He had been born and bred in Barbie, and he knew his townsmen—oh, yes—he knew them. He knew they laughed because he had no gift of the gab, and could never be provost, or bailie, or elder, or even chairman of the gasworks! 'Oh, verra well, verra well, let Connal and Brodie and Allardyce have the talk, and manage the town's affairs' (he was damned if they should manage his!); he, for his part, preferred the substantial reality." So that he treated Barbie with contempt; he had a civil word for nobody, and his manners were as bad as only Scotch manners can be. It was these very manners, however, that helped to bring about his downfall. One fine morning a stranger walked into Barbie; he was a Scotchman, and in his appearance there was "an air of dirty and pretentious well-to-doness," which is the Scotch way.

Well, this stranger ran up against Mr. Gourlay.

"'It's a fine morning, Mr. Gourlay!' simpered the stranger. His air was that of a forward tenant who thinks it a great thing to pass remarks on the weather with his laird.

"Gourlay cast a look at the dropping heavens.

"'Is that *your* opinion?' said he. 'I fail to see 't mysel' . . .'

"The stranger laughed, a little deprecating giggle. 'I meant it was fine weather for the fields,' he explained. . . .

"'Are *you* a farmer, then?' Gourlay nipped in, with his eye on the white waistcoat.

"'Oh—oh, Mr. Gourlay! A farmer, no. Hi—hi! I'm not a farmer. I daresay, now, you have no mind of *me!*'

"'No,' said Gourlay, regarding him very gravely and steadily with his dark eyes. 'I cannot say, sir, that I have the pleasure of remembering *you!*'

"'Man, I'm a son of auld John Wilson of Brigabee!'

"'Oh, auld Wilson, the mole-catcher!' said contemptuous Gourlay. 'What's this they christened him now? "Toddling Johnnie," was it noat?'

"Wilson coloured. But he sniggered to gloss over the awkwardness of the remark. A coward always sniggers when insulted, pretending that the insult is only a joke of his opponent, and therefore to be laughed aside. So he escapes the quarrel which he fears a show of displeasure might provoke.

"But, though Wilson was not a handy man, it was not timidity only that caused his tame submission to Gourlay. . . ."

Here you have the two types of Scotchmen presented in speaking likenesses, namely, the bully, primed with "repressiveness" and "force of character," and the giggling lick-spittle who does not know how to fight and consequently falls back on livid revenges.

Later, Wilson ventures on a remark about business. Gourlay retorts:

"'Business! Heavens, did ye hear him talking? What did Toddling Johnny's son

know about business? What was the world coming to? To hear him setting up his face there and asking the best merchant in the town whether business was brisk! It was high time to put him in his place, the conceited upstart, shoving himself forward like an equal!'

"For it was the assumption of equality implied by Wilson's manner that offended Gourlay—as if mole-catcher's son and monopolist were discussing, on equal terms, matters of interest to them both.

"'Business!' he said, gravely. 'Well, I'm not well acquainted with your line, but I believe mole-traps are cheap—if ye have any idea of taking up the oald trade!'

"Wilson's eyes flickered over him, hurt and dubious. His mouth opened—then shut—then he decided to speak after all. 'Oh, I was thinking Barbie would be very quiet,' said he, 'compared wi' places where they have the railway! I was thinking it would need stirring up a bit.'

"'Oh, ye was thinking that, was ye?'

birred Gourlay, with a stupid man's repetition of his jibe. 'Well, I believe there's a grand opening in the moleskin line, so *there's* a chance for ye! My quarrymen wear out their breeks in no time!'

"Wilson's face, which had swelled with red shame, went a dead white. 'Good morning!' he said, and started rapidly away with a vicious dig of his stick upon the wet road.

"'Goo-ood mor-r-ning, serr!' Gourlay birred after him; 'goo-ood mor-r-ning, serr!' He felt he had been bright this morning. He had put the branks on Wilson!"

In spite of his smallness and rattiness, Wilson is not without his Scotch feelings, so that he goes away and schemes. And the end of his scheming is that he becomes a trade rival of Gourlay's in Barbie. Perhaps man never had a more unscrupulous or fiendishly cunning trade rival. The end of it is that Gourlay is brought to the verge of bankruptcy and dies miserably, while Barbie is left to go on its wicked way rejoicing. This

fight between two ugly natures is watched by the population of Barbie with great zest; the combatants are continually egged on by the sarcastic comments of the neebors, who practically hate them both as they hate one another. And the result is a picture which rivals in hideousness anything of the kind which has hitherto been attempted. From *The House with the Green Shutters* one is able to gather what life in a Scotch township really means. One understands, too, how it comes to pass that the Scotchmen one meets in London are so wanting in the qualities which render communication between men possible and tolerable. Persons who have spent their youth in such a township as Barbie must of necessity have altogether wrong views about life and the reason for it. Their hand is against every man; to get and to keep by fair means or foul is their sole ambition, and of the finer feelings which keep existence sweet they know absolutely nothing. It is a squalid picture, and not in the least flattering to Scotland. Yet the Scotch

critics have not ventured to deny its authenticity; indeed, they admit that there is a great deal in it. Mr. Douglas, the author of *The House with the Green Shutters*, is himself a Scotchman, and to malign his country is about the last thing you may expect from a Scotch writer; his tendency usually is the other way. To put Thrums, Drumtochty, and Barbie into one vessel, as it were, to mix them and make a blend of them is probably to get at the truth about the Scot as he lives and moves in his native element. And when one has done this, one can only imagine that the average Scotchman is a compound of two things,—to wit, the knave and the fool.

VII

THE BARD

In England "the Bard" stands for Shakespeare; in Scotland, of course, when you say "the Bard" you mean Robert Burns. Nothing that Scotland ever possessed has abided so firmly in the heart of the Scotchman as "the Bard"—Robert Burns, that is to say. An Englishman can forget that Shakespeare ever existed. A Scotsman never forgets that Robert Burns was a Scotchman. Morn, noon, and night he will talk to you of Burns if you give him half a chance. Till Dr. J. M. Barrie and Dr. Crockett came in, the Scotchman had no other book but a dog's-eared Burns, from which work he gathered his views of life, including justification for his vices. Round the person and poetry of

Burns numberless well-meaning people have found it worth their while to write a literature. There was a time when "the Bard" received praise only from mere poets. Keats wrote sonnets about him; Montgomery offered him the usual graceful tribute; Wordsworth mentioned him cheek by jowl with Chatterton; and even Eliza Cook had her metrical say about him. Then the prose men came along — Carlyle, Stevenson, Henley. Carlyle took the man Burns and set him up for a tremendous genius, with "a head of gold." Stevenson, whom probably for this reason the Scotch do not love, ventured to suggest that Mr. Burns had "feet of clay." Mr. Henley followed and accentuated the feet of clay, greatly to the annoyance of all Scotland. It ill becomes the present writer to attempt to do what has already been done so well, therefore he will say nothing about either heads of gold or feet of clay. But Robert Burns is everybody's property, and one may crave leave even at this late day to say about him the thing that one believes.

The whole truth about Burns may be summed up in half a dozen words. He was a poet, he was a loose liver, and he was a ploughman. And if one looks through his writings, one is forced to the conclusion that he owes his fame to the circumstances that he was a loose liver and a ploughman rather than to the circumstance that he was a poet. To take up the works of Burns in one volume and to glance through them haphazard, assaying here a page and there a page, is to come to a knowledge of him which is rather staggering. As I write, I have before me the Globe Edition of the *Complete Works of Robert Burns*, edited by Alexander Smith. It is a portly book, and one is aware that it contains matter which is really of excellent quality, considered as poetry. Yet to test it by chance openings is to perceive that in the main Burns, as poet, has been vastly overrated. On page 211, for example, which is about the middle of the book, I find five pieces, not one of which is good enough to grace a common valentine. We lead off with *Peggy's Charms:*

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art;
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

Not to put too fine a point upon it, this is arrant drivel, villainously rhymed. Then comes *Up in the Morning Early:*

Up in the morning's no' for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill's I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

One surmises *Up in the Morning Early* belongs to "that great body of treasurable songs with which Burns has dowered his countrymen." On the face of it, to find sorrier stuff one would have to visit an Eng-

lish music hall. There is not a glimmer of poetry in any one of the twelve lines, and the composition as a whole might have been written by a precocious infant in a Glasgow Board School. After this precious production we are regaled with the appended touching piece of sentimentalism:

> Tho' cruel fate should bid us part,
> As far's the pole and line;
> Her dear idea round my heart
> Should tenderly entwine.
>
> Tho' mountains frown and deserts howl,
> And oceans roar between;
> Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
> I still would love my Jean.

The spectacle of a gentleman having somebody's "dear idea" entwined, whether tenderly or otherwise, round his heart would surely set a cat laughing. And the loving of Jean, though mountains frown and deserts howl and oceans roar between, is clearly the merest fustian. Follows *I Dreamed I Lay Where Flowers were Springing*—a stupid sort of dream to say the least of it. The flowers,

it seems, were springing "gaily in the sunny beam," and the poet, it seems, not only "dreamed that he lay among them" but, that he was "list'ning to the wild birds singing by a falling crystal stream," which is a very common and hackneyed thing for a tenth-rate poet to do. But mark:

Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming
A' my flowery bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceived me,
She promised fair, and performed but ill;
Of monie a joy and hope bereav'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

The moral here is as lame as the meter, and in the open market to-day the "poem" is not worth fourpence. We finish the page with *Bonie Ann:*

Ye gallants bright, I red you right,
Beware of bonie Ann:
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.

Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
  Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimpy lac'd her genty waist,
  That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, grace, and love, attendant move,
  And pleasure leads the van;
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
  They wait on bonie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
  But love enslaves the man:
Ye gallants braw, I red you a'
  Beware of bonie Ann.

One notes that three out of these five lucubrations have to do with love, and one wonders how a man who went about with such ill-considered love-verses in his pocket ever got a woman to look at him.

To take our life in our hands once more, we open on page 153. Here we have a choice selection of short pieces, and feeble, which we reproduce as they stand:

TO JOHN M'MURDO, Esq.

O, could I give thee India's wealth,
  As I this trifle send!
Because thy joy in both would be
  To share them with a friend.
But golden sands did never grace
  The Heliconean stream;
Then take what gold could never buy—
  An honest Bard's esteem.

ON THE DEATH OF A LAP-DOG, NAMED ECHO

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now half-extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now half your din of tuneless sound
With Echo silent lies.

LINES WRITTEN AT LOUDEN MANSE

The night was still, and o'er the hill
The moon shone on the castle wa';
The mavis sang, while dew-drops hang
Around her on the castle wa'.

Sae merrily they danced the ring,
Frae eenin' till the cock did craw;
And the o'erword o' the spring,
Was Irvine's bairns are bonie a'.

These three effusions, dear reader, are really and truly the work of Burns—or, if you prefer it, of Burrrrrns. In despair one hunts up something for which the man is noted. *Scots Wha Hae* one thinks, will serve. It has been described as noble, and marvellous, and inspiring, and Heaven knows what besides. Here it is:

Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots whom Bruce has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour,
See the front o' battle lour,
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?—
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do or dee!

As a matter of fact, *Scots Wha Hae* is one those poems which most people have heard about and few people have read. For this reason I print it *in extenso* and commend it to the consideration of the critical. Is it really noble, or marvellous, or inspiring?

Would it pass muster as a new performance? Is it a whit the better, or sounder, or more convincing than *God Save the King*, which everybody cheerfully admits is not poetry? I, for one, hae me doots.

Like Artemus Ward and writers of "Wot-the-Orfis-Boy Finks" order, Burns owes much of his seeming inspiration and humour to an uncouth orthography. Put into decent English, many of his most vaunted lays amount to nothing at all. Indeed, practically the whole of the *poetry* which came from his pen could be compressed into a book of fifty pages. I do not say that much of the matter one would have to include in those fifty pages is not matter of an exceptional and extraordinary quality. Mr. Henley has told us that in the vernacular, Burns, at his best, touches the highest level; and with this pronouncement nobody who knows the difference between good writing and bad will quarrel. But I do assert that the best of Burns is not sufficient, either in quality or quantity, to justify the absurd fame which

has been bestowed upon him by his countrymen. James I., whom the average Scotchman barely knows by name, was, taking him all in all, quite as good a poet as Burns. So was Barbour; so was Drummond of Hawthornden; and, I had almost added, so were Stevenson and Robert Buchanan. The question naturally arises, How comes it to pass that Burns who, excepting by a fluke, was always more or less of a middling poet, has come to rank as the finest thing in letters that Scotland ever produced? The answer to that question is simple enough. In spite of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, and two or three other pieces which are the delight and mainstay of the Scotch kirk-goer, Burns was undoubtedly the poet of licence and alcoholism. Also he was a ploughman.

Should humble state our mirth provoke!
  What folly to misca' that,
The sapling grows a stately oak,
  Wi' spreading shade and a' that.
For a' that and a' that,
His toils and cares and a' that,
We 've seen a ploughman crowned at last
The king o' men for a' that.

After illicit love and flaring drunkenness, nothing appeals so much to Scotch sentiment as having been born in the gutter. In this matter of admiration for people who attain notoriety from a basis of humble origins I do not know that the Scotch stand entirely alone. At the present moment, much fuss is being made in the newspapers over a policeman who has seen fit to devote himself to the painting of pictures, and who has succeeded in getting one of his canvases hung at Burlington House; and if I remember rightly there used to be a postman poet of whom sundry highly placed critics wrote sundry kindly encouraging and gratuitous things. Also the English press is apt to tell us that the great Lord So-and-So was originally a bootblack, and that the great Mr. So-and-So went to Canada with seven shillings in his pocket. In fact, the prodigy who began on nothing, and ultimately became rich or famous, is a figure which British humanity dearly loves. And Burns, as we have seen, was a ploughman. What special excellence may lie in being a

ploughman nobody but a Scotchman may perceive. In England our booms on humble talent are of short duration. Clare and Ebenezer Elliott both had their little day, and ceased to be. But the Scotch ploughman persists, and the fact that he was a ploughman helps him to persist, and is a great source of pride to the Scotch. The real reason, however, why Burns became, and continues to be, a sort of patron saint to the peoples north of the Tweed is, as I have already suggested, that he was an erotic writer and a condoner of popular vices. Turn where you will in his precious works, you will find that drunkenness and impropriety are matters for which he has unqualified sympathy. Whiskey and women are the subjects which furnish forth the majority of his flights. He writes of both with a freedom which would not nowadays be tolerated, and the moral effect of what he has to say cannot be regarded as otherwise than detrimental. I have before pointed out that one of Mr. Henley's critics has asserted that the stand-

ard of morality in the rural districts of Scotland is much lower to-day than it was in Burns's time. The inference is obvious. Burns, every Scotchman tells you, and tells you truly, has played no small part in moulding the sentiments and tendencies of the Scotch people as we know them. It was he who gave them their first notion of bumptious independence; it was he who taught them that "a man's a man for a' that"—which, on the whole, is a monstrous fallacy; it was he who averred that whiskey and freedom gang together; and it was he who gave the countenance of song to shameful and squalid sexuality. In a great number of Burns's love songs the suggestion is of the lowest. One could take a selection of these songs, print them in a little book, have them sold in the streets of London at a penny, and be prosecuted at Bow Street for one's trouble. The man's mind was not clean; he made the Muse an instrument for the promulgation of skulduddery (I will not vouch for the orthography, but every Scotchman knows what I

mean); he degraded and prostituted his intellect, and earned thereby the love and worship of a people who appear to have a sympathetic weakness for erotic verse if it be but Scotch.

It is hard to get the truth about Burns out of the Scotch writers; yet the more honest among them have always had a sneaking suspicion that he was an overrated poet. Somehow, in perusing their estimates, one has a feeling that Burns is not so much being expounded as defended. Stevenson, who tried to be just, has come nearer the mark about him than any writer of our own time; but even Stevenson lacked the courage to go the whole hog. Of Burns, the writer, he could be brought to say nothing more trenchant than that he "had a tendency to borrow a hint," and that he was "indebted in a very uncommon degree to Ramsay and Fergusson." And, he adds, by way of defence, that "when we remember Burns's obligation to his predecessors, we must never forget his immense advances on them." Perhaps not.

As to Burns, the man, it is safe to say that a more profligate person has seldom figured on the slopes of Parnassus. In love he was as carnal as he was false. He canted and prated and pretended, but his relations with women will not bear examination. His life as a whole would have discredited a dustman, much less a poet. He whined about his "misfortunes," and advertised them and made much out of them; but nobody in his senses can sympathise with him. That he should be held up for a model by Scottish writers and Scottish preachers is a crying scandal. The king-o'-men cackle is the sheerest impertinence. Burns never was the king o' men. He was never even a decent living man. He never had a rag of conduct wherewithal to cover himself. He was simply an incontinent yokel with a gift for metricism. That his memory should stand for so much in Scotland constitutes a very grave reflection upon the Scottish character and the Scottish point of view.

VIII

THE SCOT AS A CRITIC

TAKING him all in all, the Scotch critic is a good deal of an anomaly. To criticise is scarcely the Scotchman's *forte*, his chief gifts lying rather in the direction of admiration, particularly of admiration for whatever is Scotch. But we have amongst us (and I do not wish him other than a long and prosperous career) one Scotch critic—or, at any rate, a Scotchman who passes for a critic. I refer, need it be said, to Dr. William Archer. Dr. Archer is the dramatic critic of the *World* newspaper. Whenever I have looked into the *World* newspaper, I have found a page or so of Dr. Archer. His work appears to be done to the satisfaction of his employers, and I have no fault to find with it, excepting that

I cannot bring myself to feel enthusiastic about it. To tackle Dr. Archer flying, as it were, let us peep at his contribution to the current number of his journal. Herein he deals with a play by Miss Netta Syrett and preaches a little sermon to theatrical managers.

"I admit, then [he says], that from the actor-manager's point of view—his quite legitimate and inevitable point of view under our accursed system—the play has drawbacks that might well stand in the way of its production. But if any manager read it and did not recognise that he was face to face with an exceptional talent, and one of which, by judicious encouragement, much might be made, then I say that he showed a deplorable lack of discernment. This—hypothetic—manager ought to have sent for the authoress and said, 'Miss Syrett, I cannot, for such and such reasons, produce this play. But there are scenes in it which show me that you have the making of a playwright in you. Have you other ideas? Yes, of course you

have. Well, go home and draw me out the scenario of a play that you think would suit me, and then come and let us talk it over. Remember, I promise nothing, except my very best attention to anything you may bring me. But that you shall have; and if you are not above taking hints from my experience, you may be able to avoid certain trifling errors and crudities into which you have fallen in this piece. Don't be in a hurry. You ladies, if I may say so, are apt to imagine that, when once you have got an idea, a play can be improvised like a newspaper article or a six shilling novel. This is a mistake. A play, to have any solid value, must be carefully and laboriously built up. You will make false steps, find yourself in blind alleys, and have to try back and start afresh many and many a time. You will have days of discouragement, when your characters refuse point-blank to do what you want them to. Probably you will find in the end that you have given as much thought and labour to every line of your play as you would to a

whole page of a novel. But if you are prepared to take your art seriously, you may rely upon my taking seriously whatever you may offer me. And be assured of this, that if you fail to do something really worth while, my disappointment will be scarcely less than your own.' In some such words, as it seems to me, should the sagacious manager have addressed the authoress of *The Finding of Nancy*."

Excellently intended, my dear Dr. Archer, excellently and honestly intended. But could gratuitousness, or egregiousness, or flat-footedness go further? Such an oration, happily, might come out of none but a Scotch mouth or from any pen but that of a Scotchman. In point of unnecessariness it rivals pretty well aught that I have had the felicity to see in print. And it illustrates to admiration the Scotch faculty for spreading out the commonplace and being sententious over it.

What Dr. Archer's view of the theatre may be nobody knows. In the beginning of the speech I have quoted he refers to "our ac-

cursed system," so that there must be a screw loose somewhere. For years Dr. Archer has been pounding away at this same system, and it seems to continue. Nor has Dr. Archer made the slightest dint upon it. A little while back, one of the wags in which London appears to abound pointed out that plays praised by Dr. Archer invariably come in for the shortest of runs. To which impeachment Dr. Archer replied, with great ingenuousness, by printing a formidable list of plays which had survived his approval. Another wag having said something against the Scotch in a paper called *The Outlook*, Dr. Archer exclaimed, in cold type, "*Outlook* indeed! Methinks that north of the Tweed they will call it *Outrage!*" This, of course, is a Scotch joke, and therefore an old one. In the year 600 or thereabouts, Gregory the Great, noting the fair faces and golden hair of some youths in the market-place of Rome, enquired from what country the men came. "They are Angles," was the reply. "Not *Angles*," quoth the worthy Gregory, "but

angels." For thirteen centuries the pun of the Bishop of Rome had remained decently tucked away in the history books. And in 1901, Dr. Archer, who really is a wit, drags it forth and makes another like it.

All these, however, be small deer. If we wish to acquaint ourselves with the true inwardness of Dr. Archer as critic, we must turn to his *magnum opus*—that great guinea work of his, entitled *Poets of the Younger Generation*. Now, on the question of modern poetry, and particularly of the younger school of poets, people interested in poetry are always glad to hear words of wisdom. Have we any contemporary poets? If so, are they writing poetry for us, contemporary or otherwise? The subject invites. Somehow and for some reason or other it invited Dr. Archer. Indeed, it went further than inviting him; it inveigled him. No doubt the notion of writing a book about poets came to him on one of his discouraging days. He had been hammering, hammering, hammering at the theatre and "our accursed

system," and he was fain for a softer job. What work could a poor, tired critic take up outside the potter's field of our accursed system? When a critic gets into that frame of mind he always thinks of the poets. Dr. Archer thought of the poets—the living poets —the poets of the younger generation. Being a Scotchman, Dr. Archer thought, and straightway set to work. He appears to have plodded steadfastly through the writings of no fewer than thirty-three of the minor contemporary poets of England and America. Of each of these thirty-three children of the Muse, beginning with the Rev. H. C. Beeching and ending with William Butler Yeats, he wrote painful notices, bejewelled with excerpts, put them into a book, and got them published by Mr. John Lane. With the beauty or otherwise of his thirty-three notices, in spite of their exquisite thirty-three-ness, I do not propose greatly to concern myself. Their general drift and tenor may be inferred from the following examples, culled from the article on Mr. Kipling:

"Far be it from me to disparage *Scots Wha Hae*, but I am not sure that it possesses the tonic quality of the refrain of Mr. Kipling's song of defeat:

An' there ain't no chorus 'ere to give,
Nor there ain't no band to play;
But I wish I was dead 'fore I done what I did
Or seen what I'd seed that day!

What in the name of goodness have *Scots Wha Hae* and these four lines got to do with one another? How can they be compared, except only as verse, and where, oh where, does the tonic quality of the Kipling lines come in? Again:

"In all the poetry of warfare, was there ever a more exactly observed and yet imaginative touch than that which describes the guns of the enemy 'shaking their bustles like ladies so fine'? It is grotesque, and it is magnificent."

As a matter of fact it is not observed at all, and it is certainly not magnificent. Ladies do not shake their bustles. Nowadays, indeed, they have no bustles to shake, and I

should imagine that the sound criticism about the simile is that it is too temporary and far fetched. And for the third and last time:

"Only by some narrow trick of definition can such work (*McAndrew's Hymn*) be excluded from the sphere of poetry; and poetry or no poetry, it is certainly very strong and vital literature."

Here let us agree to differ with Dr. Archer, inasmuch as *McAndrew's Hymn* is merely rhymed note-book eked out with a few phrases of the Doric.

On the whole, *Poets of the Younger Generation* might well have gone down to posterity as a collection of middling and slightly wrong-headed reviews, had Dr. Archer possessed a tithe of the shrewdness commonly imputed to persons of his blood. But in putting the book before the world, Dr. Archer could not be content to figure as a simple reviewer, he must needs preface it with a pompous and bloated introduction. "Appreciation [he says nobly] is the end

and aim of the following pages. The verb 'to appreciate' is used, rightly or wrongly, in two senses; it sometimes means to realise, at other times to enhance the value of a thing. I use the word in both significations. While attempting to define, to appraise, the talent of individual poets, I hope to enhance the reader's estimate of the value of contemporary poetry as a whole." After several pages of this sort of thing we come upon a full-dress "personal statement," the like of which has never before been given us by mortal critic. Practically, it is a biography of Dr. William Archer, with special reference to Dr. William Archer's spiritual and intellectual growth and his "qualifications as a critic of poetry." The pose and tone of it are inimitable. It puts Burns and his "wild artless notes" utterly to the blush. As Dr. Archer himself would say, it is grotesque and it is magnificent. It begins with a rataplan on ancestral drums: "In the first place, I am a pure bred Scotchman. There is some vague family legend of an ancestor of my

father's having come from England with Oliver Cromwell and settled in Glasgow; but I never could discover any evidence of it. The only thing that speaks in its favour is that my name, common in England, is uncommon in Scotland. My maternal grandfather and grandmother both came of families that seem to have dwelt from time immemorial in and about Perth, at the gateway of the Highlands. This being so, it appears very improbable that there should not be some Keltic admixture in my blood; but I cannot absolutely lay my finger on any 'Mac' among my forbears. Both my parents belong to families of a deeply religious cast of mind, ultra-orthodox in dogma, heterodox and even vehemently dissenting on questions of Church Government. I can trace some way back in my mother's family a strain of good, sound, orthodox literary culture and taste; of specially poetical faculty, little or none. It may, perhaps, be worth mentioning that one of my great-grandfathers or great-great-uncles printed—and I believe, edited—an

edition of the poets, much esteemed in its day."

Nothing could be better worth mentioning, Mr. Archer. Pray proceed:

"The earliest symptom I can find in myself that can possibly be taken as showing any marked relation to the poetic side of life, is an extreme susceptibility (very clearly inherited from my father) to simple, pathetic music. It is related that even in my infancy, one special tune—the *Adeste Fideles*—if so much as hummed in my neighbourhood, would always make me howl lustily; and, indeed, to this day it seems to me infinitely pathetic. I have carried through life, without any sort of musical gift, and with a very imperfect apprehension of tonality, harmony, and the refinements and complexities of musical expression, this keen sensibility to the emotional effect of certain lovely rhythms and simple curves of notes. I am not sure that *Lascia ch'ie pranga*, *Che faer farò senza Euridice*, and the cantabile in Chopin's *Funeral March*, do not seem to me the very

divinest utterances of the human spirit, before which all the achievements of all the poets fade and grow dim. But it is all one to me (or very nearly so) whether they are reeled off on a barrel organ or performed by the greatest singers—the finest orchestra. Nay, my own performance of them, in the silent chamber concerts of memory, are enough to bring the tears to my eyes."

Good man!

"I cannot remember that the poetry I learned at school interested or pleased me particularly—'On Linden, when the sun was low,' 'FitzJames was brave, yet to his heart,' 'The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,' and so forth. . . . The first composition of mine that ever found its way into print was some sort of a rhapsody (in prose) on Byron at Missolonghi. The attack passed off in six months or so, and I am not aware that it left behind any permanent ill effects. At the same time I read the greater part of *The Faerie Queene* with a

certain pleasure, but without any real appreciation."

Wordsworth this remarkable youth "read for a college essay"; "Coleridge came to him in the train of Wordsworth"; and at seventeen *The Ancient Mariner* seemed to him "the most magical of poems." Tennyson he read "with pleasure"; Keats "had not yet taken hold" of him; and Milton he "could not read." Ultimately, however, he came to appreciate Milton in this wise. "I spent my twentieth year idling in Australia, and, being somewhat hard up for literature, I set myself to read *Paradise Lost* from beginning to end, at the rate of a book a day. I accomplished the task, but it bored me unspeakably. . . . I did not return to it for seven or eight years, until one day I found myself starting on a railway journey with nothing to read, and paid a shilling at a station bookstall for a pocket *Paradise Lost*." On that journey the scales fell from Dr. Archer's eyes. Ever since, *Paradise Lost* has been to him "an inexhaustible mine of the pure gold of poetry."

Later, we learn that Dr. Archer's own metrical efforts have been "almost entirely confined to comic, or, at any rate, journalistic, verse," though he "never attained even the fluency of the practised newspaper rhymester." Greek and Latin verses, he adds, "were undreamt of in the Scottish curriculum of my day. Practically we knew not what quantity meant."

Altogether, therefore, Dr. William Archer's "qualifications as a critic of poetry" would seem to be, on his own showing, of a negative rather than a positive order. He is a pure bred Scotchman; he may have a little English blood in him, but he has not been able to trace it; he is without any sort of musical gift; he likes his music "reeled off on a barrel organ"; poetry had no charms for him till he was seventeen; and he did not discover Milton's "inexhaustible mine of the pure gold of poetry" till he was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years of age. Also at his college they "did not know what quantity meant." Yet at the age of forty-three he

had "ready for press" five hundred pages of appreciations of poets of the younger generation. It is truly marvellous and prodigiously Scotch. And it sets one wondering. At what epoch in his extraordinary life did Dr. Archer begin to take a critical interest in the drama? Was he shovelled into that interest by the exigencies of his work on newspapers, or did it come to him, like his love of Milton, on a railway journey? Furthermore, how many of his brither Scots, who labour so solemnly in the vineyard of literary journalism and plume themselves on their "pull" in contemporary letters, are of the like origins and possess the same disqualifications as Dr. William Archer? I doubt if one per cent. of them is really competent. I know for a fact that ninety per cent. of them are absolutely devoid of taste, much less of understanding and vision, and that they exercise critical functions not because they have insight or feeling for literature, but because "a living" and certain petty powers are to be had out of it. The much vaunted "Scotch pull" in

criticism is without doubt the worst trouble that has ever assailed English letters. In a great measure it has been responsible for the general slackening and stodginess which have overtaken the whole business during the past decade or so. Persons who write, not to mention persons who read, know full well that at the present time criticism is well nigh a dead letter in this country. Reviews are no longer taken seriously either by authors or the public; the literary papers languish, depending, for such revenue as they possess, upon publishers' advertisements instead of upon circulation; literary opinion has been fined down to sheer puff on the one hand and flagrant abuse or neglect on the other, and to be the friend or admiring acquaintance of certain persons is become the only sure road to literary advancement. It is the fashion to say that nobody, however ill-disposed, can stop the sale of a good book, or keep the author of such a book out of his meed of recognition. In the long result this is true. But waiting for the long result is a weary business,

particularly when you discover that there is an inclination on the part of the people who have "the pull" to put the clock back for you at every turn; what time they boom the work of their "ain folk" and shout loudly and insistently for catch-penny mediocrity. This, by the way, is not in any sense a "sore-head" asseveration; because my own writings have, as a rule, been of so slender a nature that I have marvelled to see them noticed at all. Besides, I do not think that I am without friends even among the apostles of the "Scotch pull." They have done me many a service, and with a lively sense of favours to come I hereby offer them gratitude. All the same, I should not be sorry to see them disbanded. I should not be sorry to hear that never a one of them was to be permitted again to set pen to paper in the capacity of reviewer. Literary journalism would be all the sweeter and saner for such a closure, and judging by the rates of payment they take, the "Scotch pull" combination would be very little the poorer.

NOTE [1]

The Scots opinion of Burns may perhaps be best illustrated by quoting a Burns-Night oration. The speech appended below may be taken as a moderate sample of what Burns's admirers are in the habit of saying about him. I am indebted to Dr. Ross's volume, *Henley on Burns*, for the excerpt: "Burns suffered more from remorse and genuine penitence than probably any man who ever lived. Not only so, but the very bitterness of his cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' has been seized upon by his calumniators, and used as a weapon to stab him behind his back. But leave Burns to his Maker, and, keeping in view the parable of

[1] In the Embankment Gardens, London, there is a statue of Burns, on the pedestal of which appears the appended inscription:

"The Poetic Genius of my country found me at the plough and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes, and rural pleasures of my native soil in my native tongue. I tuned my wild, artless notes as she inspired."

Now any poet who can babble about his wild, artless notes is beyond praying for. I think this particular monument ought to be taken down.

the Pharisee and the publican, it is just possible, nay probable, that those who talk so glibly about the sins of Burns may find at the great day of reckoning that the penitent poet and the penitent publican are justified rather than they. There are certain classes of people who must always look upon Burns with doubt and suspicion. Many decent, worthy people, naturally and properly dislikir g the clay, miss the gold. Many worthy teetotallers dislike the poet on account of his drinking songs; but even they are beginning to forgive him for writing *Willie brewed a peck o' maut* and such like. The Pharisee and the hypocrite, throughout their generations, will always dislike him, not because of his sins, but on account of his satires:

> Oh ye wha are sae guid yersel',
> Sae pious and sae holy,
> You 've nought to do but mark an' tell
> Yer neebour's fauts and folly;
> Whose life is like a weel-gaun mill
> Supplied in store o' water:
> The heapit clappers ebben still,
> An' still the clap plays clatter.

"The 'gigman' and the clothes-horse can

never take to Burns. He is not sufficiently genteel for silly ladyism and spurious nobility:

> What though on hamely fare we dine,
> Wear hodden gray, an' a' that,
> Gie fules their silk, an' knaves their wine,
> A man's a man for a' that.

"The ultra-Calvinist can never take to Burns, for Burns broke the back of 'the auld licht.' The genuine Calvinist of the poet's time showed only the dark side of the shield. Burns showed the bright:

> Where human weakness has come short,
> Or frailty stepp'd aside,
> Do thou, All Good, for such thou art,
> In shades of darkness hide.
>
> Where with intention I have err'd,
> No other plea I have,
> But 'Thou art good, and goodness still
> Delighteth to forgive.'

"The golden calf is as much worshipped in England to-day as it was in the desert four thousand years ago:

> If happiness have not her seat
> And centre in the breast,
> We may be wise and rich and great,
> But never can be blest.

"Burns will never be praised by those who dote upon forms, vestments, and such like priestly trumpery, for he wrote *The Cottar's Saturday Night:*

Compared with this, how poor religion's pride
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Religion's every grace except the heart.
The Power incensed the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But, haply, in some cottage, far apart,
Will hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,
And in his book of life the inmate poor enrol.

"A child of the common people himself, Burns never deserted his class. He taught the poor man that:

The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

"He ennobled honest labour:

The honest man, though e'er sae puir,
Is king o' men for a' that.

"He was the high priest of humanity:

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.

Affliction's sons are brothers in distress;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss.

It 's coming yet for a' that,
That man to man the warld o'er
Shall brithers be, an' a' that.

"Ay, Burns is like a great mountain, based on earth, towering towards heaven—of a mixed character, containing gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay, and from which every man, according to his taste, can become enriched by the gold and the silver, or get mired in the clay. All that is best in Burns (and that is nearly the whole) will remain a precious possession with the Anglo-Saxon race in the ages yet to come. The Stars and Stripes of our cousins across the sea—the great American people—will ere long float side by side with the grand old flag that for a thousand years has braved the battle and the breeze. And the Bible and Burns will lie side by side in the homes of the reunited Anglo-Saxon race,—the freest, bravest, and most liberty-loving people the world ever saw or shall see."

It will be noted that herein Burns is made out to be an honest fellow who went wrong

only at times; also the mire in him is a small detail, his best being nearly the whole of him; also that in the glorious days to come, when the Anglo-Saxon races shall have fused into one great people, Burns and the Bible are to be our great literary and ethical standby.

As indicating the kind of abuse that the Scot is in the habit of levelling at persons who disagree with him as to Burns, I likewise print a set of verses aimed at Mr. Henley by one of Dr. Ross's scarifiers:

Ere disappointment, cauld neglect, and spleen
Had soured my bluid an' jaundiced baith my een,
My saul aspired, upo' the wings o' rhyme,
To mount unscaithed to airy heichts sublime;
An', like the lark, to drap, in music rare,
Braw sangs to cheer folks when their hearts were sair.
I struggled lang, but fand it a' nae use,
Nocht paid, I saw, save arrogant abuse.

"Blind fule," I cried, "to fling your pearls to swine.
Awa' wi' dreams o' laurell'd days divine!
Bid Fame guid-bye, and a' sic feckless trash,—
Henceforth write naething but what brings ye cash."

I glower'd about for something worth my while—
Some *thing* held dear—on whilk to "spew" my bile,
An' fixt my e'e upo' a certain bard,
Syne bocht a Jamieson, an' studied hard;
An' wha that hears me the vernacular speak
Wad think I learn'd the hale o't in a week.

Weel up in Scotch, I set mysel' to wark
To strip the *Poet* to his very sark,
An' gie the warld a pictur' o' the *Man*
An' a' his *Doin's*—on the cut-throat plan.
My book, gat up regairdless o' expense,
Was hailed *the* book by ilka man o' sense;
Some "half-read" gowks ayont the Tweed micht sneer,
An' name mysel' in words no' fit to hear;
I only leuch. The man himsel' was deid—
He couldna reach me, sae I didna heed.

The author of this effusion must have known perfectly well that Mr. Henley would have written just as he has written, if Burns had been alive. The suggestion that "he couldna reach me, and I didna heed," is purely gratuitous and foolish.

IX

THE SCOT AS BIOGRAPHER

THERE are two Scotch books of biography, all published, I believe, within the last six years, which invariably raise my gorge. One of them is *Margaret Ogilvy*, by Dr. J. M. Barrie; the second is *J. M. Barrie and his Books*, by Dr. J. A. Hammerton. The first, dealing with a dead mother, is a work that nothing but a sense of duty could induce me to handle in the present connection. It has, however, been put before the public without so much as an attempt at justification or apology, and with the plain intention of being sold precisely in the manner of other literary wares, and it must therefore take its chance. *Margaret Ogilvy* appears to have gone into no end of editions. It is an account of the

character and sayings of Dr. J. M. Barrie's mother, viewed in the light of Dr. Barrie's own "literaryness." I have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be one of the most snobbish books that have issued from the press any time this hundred years. It begins snobbishly, it goes on snobbishly, and it ends snobbishly. Offered to the reading public as a piece of fictional sentiment, it would still have been open to the charge of mawkishness. Offered unblushingly as a transcript from the life and for the perusal of all who care to purchase, deplorable is the mildest epithet one can justly apply to it. Wordsworth writes somewhere of a person "who would peep and botanise about his mother's grave." This is exactly the feeling that a reading of *Margaret Ogilvy* gives you. Comparisons in such a case would be doubly odious. Yet one does not find that Margaret Ogilvy, in spite of everything that her son has done for her in the way of "keying-up" to literary requirements, was any the sweeter, or any the nobler, or any the more intellectual

than one may presume the mother of any other writer of Dr. Barrie's parts to have been. She was a good mother, she gave birth to Dr. Barrie, she ministered to him in childhood, she denied herself for him; she took pleasure in his educational and literary progress, she offered him much advice; she believed in "God" and "love," and she died in the faith. The mothers of most literary people have done as much. It has been left to Dr. Barrie to snatch away the decent veil which hides the sanctities of life from the common gaze, and to let all the world into the privacies of the filial and maternal relation at five shillings a time. If I understand Margaret Ogilvy aright, she would have cut off both her hands rather than permit some of the things in this book to become the property of strangers, sympathetic or otherwise.

Of course, the excuse immediately forthcoming from Dr. Barrie's friends and admirers will be "the lesson." It is the only excuse that can possibly be raked up, and, like the majority of excuses, it is a poor stick

to lean upon. For "the lesson" of *Margaret Ogilvy* simply amounts to this, that conceit and self-advertisement may bring a man to the silliest and least dignified of passes. In point of fact Dr. Barrie's "little study" is just as much a study of himself as of his mother. If it shows Margaret Ogilvy in the figure of an excellent mother, it also shows J. M. Barrie in the figure of a preternaturally excellent and dutiful son. If it shows that Margaret Ogilvy was a simple, unsophisticated woman of the people, it shows also that J. M. Barrie had compassion on her intellectual shortcomings and was ever ready to humour the poor body and to twinkle tolerantly on her whimsies, when he might, had he so chosen, have withered her with a word. To take a sample passage: "Now that I was an author, I must get into a club. But you should have heard my mother on clubs! She knew of none save those to which you subscribe a pittance weekly, and the London clubs were her scorn. Often I heard her on them—she raised her voice to make me hear,

whichever room I might be in, and it was when she was sarcastic that I skulked the most: 'Thirty pounds is what he will have to pay the first year, and ten pounds a year after that. You think it's a lot o' siller? Oh, no, you're mista'en—it's nothing ava'. For the third part of thirty pounds you could rent a four-roomed house, but what is a four-roomed house, what is thirty pounds, compared to the glory of being a member of a club?' . . . My wisest policy was to remain downstars when these withering blasts were blowing, but probably I went up in self-defence.

"'I never saw you so pugnacious before, mother.'

"'Oh,' she would reply, promptly, 'you canna expect me to be sharp in the uptake when I am no' a member of a club.'

"'But the difficulty is in becoming a member. They are very particular about whom they elect, and I daresay I shall not get in.'

"'Well, I'm but a poor crittur (not being member of a club), but I think I can tell you

to make your mind easy on that head. You'll get in, I'se uphaud—and your thirty pounds will get in, too.'"

And so on. Humour, of course! The sagacious, garrulous mother, the highly diverted, patient son! The picture has pleased the Scotch and English-speaking nations of two hemispheres. Yet is it of the stupidest and the most foolish.

On another page we get the following pretty piece of curtain lifting: "So my mother and I go up the stair together. 'We have changed places,' she says; 'that was just how I used to help you up, but I'm the bairn now.' She brings out the Testament again; it was always lying within reach. . . . And when she has read for a long time she 'gives me a look,' as we say in the North, and I go out, to leave her alone with God. . . . Often and often I have found her on her knees, but I always went softly away, closing the door. I never heard her pray, but I know very well how she prayed, and that, when that door was shut, there was not a

day in God's sight between the worn woman and the little child."

We can do without such books, Dr. J. M. Barrie, even though they sell well.

Even as Dr. Archer has discovered in *Paradise Lost* an inexhaustible mine of the pure gold of poetry, so have I found in Dr. J. A. Hammerton's *J. M. Barrie and his Books* an inexhaustible fund of the pure gold of Scotch opinion not only as to Dr. Barrie, but also as to other matters. First let me string together a few pearls about Dr. Barrie.

"I have seen it argued [says our excellent author] that the publication of such a book as this is a reprehensible practice [*sic*], in that it implies the elevation of its subject to the rank of a classic. . . . A sufficient answer to this charge would seem to be that in such writers as J. M. Barrie, Thomas Hardy, 'Ian Maclaren,' Rudyard Kipling, and several others [*sic*], the public that reads books is vastly more interested than it is in its mighty dead."

The collocation of "such writers" in this

passage is as ingenious as it is absurdly Scotch.

"Among the literary men of the present day there is none who has been more personal in his writings than Dr. Barrie; he is as personal in prose as Byron was in poetry. His own heart, his own experiences, the lives of his 'ain folk,' these have been the subjects out of which *his genius has made literature.*"

The italics are our own.

"The main distinction of Nottingham journalism lies in the fact that it is associated with the name of Dr. J. M. Barrie. . . . To-day the so-called 'Press House' is a tavern a few yards removed from the 'Frying Pan,' and there penny-a-liners and half-fledged reporters drink beer and fancy themselves full-blown journalists, carrying down the traditions of Billy Kirker and that bright Bohemian band. But there are no Barries among them."

Nottingham, evidently, is in a parlous way.

"It is well known that Dr. Barrie's start was like that of so many others who have

won their way to greatness in the Republic of Letters: a brief spell of journalism, and then—the plunge into literature."

One can hear Dr. Barrie splashing about for dear life.

"It had never occurred to him [Barrie] that his task lay so near his hand; that to turn the lives of his fellow-townsmen into literature was the way that God had chosen for him to make the age to come his own."

I should think not, indeed!

"In Barrie's case it was comparatively a short struggle, and two or three years after the time when he found that Scots dialect was enough to damn a book, he had succeeded in making it an attraction; presently its charm became the most striking feature of contemporary letters, and what we may call the Barrie school arose to accomplish feats unique in the literary history of the nineteenth century."

Prodigious!

"Sydney Smith was witty; so, too, was Sheridan; Dickens was a humourist; Hood,

like Barrie, was at once a wit and a humourist."

Who would have thought it?

"The noblest book which Barrie has given to the world is none other than *Margaret Ogilvy*, in which—to use the vile and vulgar phrase—he has made 'copy' of his mother. . . . If he had done nothing more than draw that sweet picture of a good woman's humble, happy life, he would have deserved well of his generation. It was a delicate, almost an impossible, task to take up, and only an artist of the first order could have dared to hope for success in it. . . . There is no passage in all that Barrie has written more essentially Scottish in character than the delightfully humorous account of his mother on the prospect of his election to a well-known London club, for which he had been nominated by the good fairy of his literary life—Frederick Greenwood."

Most interesting and most illuminating. Now for Dr. Hammerton on smaller matters. He assures us that "if one will only read the

anecdotes of village 'loonies' with which Scots literature abounds—especially Dean Ramsay's *Reminiscences* and *The Laird o' Logan*—he will find that the average Scots idiot was a creature of considerably more humour than the average Englishman"—which is a palpable hit. Also, "Only once have I felt inclined to wince in reading anything of Barrie's, and that was one chapter entitled, 'Making the Best of it,' in *A Window in Thrums;* for here it seemed to me he was dwelling on an unworthy element of character which is more typical of the English rural and working classes than of the Scots. I mean the flattering of wealthy fools with a view to largess."

Dr. Hammerton is quite amusing. His notion of the tremendousness of Dr. Barrie and of the vast superiority of the Scotch does him credit. One day, perhaps, he will wake up to the fact that Dr. Barrie is not among the persons who write literature. And even though Dr. Hammerton should never realise it, the fact remains.

X

THE SCOT IN LETTERS

Dr. Archer was once at pains to prove that his countrymen had contributed "at least their share" of good works to the main stream of English literature. Dr. Archer did this with the help, I believe, of an anthology by Mr. Henley. Properly wielded, an anthology is an excellent weapon, inasmuch as you can prove almost anything out of it. In the supposition that Scotland has done admirably by letters, Dr. Archer has the support of a large body of Scotchmen. For my own part I am quite ready to admit that she has done her best. What a poor best that is, everybody is aware, though so far as I know it is now for the first time set forth in print. When one comes to look upon

English literature in the mass, beginning with Chaucer and coming down to Tennyson, and dealing only with the larger forces which have gone to the production of it, one perceives at once that Scotland's share in the matter has been so small as to be scarcely worth counting. Against Chaucer, perhaps, she can place James I., but the difference is as the difference between chalk and cheese. Against Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists she has nothing to show you, good, bad, or indifferent. Against Milton I suppose she will offer you Drummond of Hawthornden, and for Shelley and Keats, Burns. And of course she vaunts herself on Scott and Carlyle, and takes a certain haughty pride in the fact that R. L. Stevenson was Scotch.

To James I. and Drummond of Hawthornden she is welcome; both of them are what may be termed tolerable poets, and there the matter ends. Of Burns and his work I have already given my view, but I would say here that while at the present moment his popu-

larity is of the widest and has all the appearances of stability, the circumstance that he wrote in a vernacular must ultimately relegate him to a position of comparative obscurity. As Scotland gradually extricates herself from the sloughs of barbarism in which she wallows so joyfully, she will inevitably shed her uncouth dialect, and, as soon as that is accomplished, Burns, excepting as a curiosity, will no longer exist.

For Scott and Carlyle little need be said. Both, I believe, have had their day. Scott, erstwhile the Wizard of the North, is rapidly dropping out of public favour. At the present moment he is what may be styled "a school-prize classic." *Ivanhoe* and *The Lady of the Lake*, once considered to be marvellous performances, are now doled out to grubby children for punctual attendance at board schools. In the libraries, public and private, Scott, of course, figures, but the public library statistics go to indicate that he is not being read with avidity, and in private libraries he is felt to be rather a cumberer of space.

Talking to a well-known Scotch critic as to the general decay of interest in Scott, I found him to be under no illusion on the point, and he electrified me by saying, "Scott—well, of course! But between ourselves, man, I cannot read the d—— books." This is pretty well everybody's case. To avow that you have not read Scott is still, perhaps, to confess to a defect in your reading. All the same, if you are a person of average tendencies, you have not read Scott, neither do you propose to do so.

Thomas Carlyle—"true Thomas" as Dr. Archer pathetically dubs him—is another Scotch rocket which has already touched its highest and begun to descend. Both intellectually and as an artist Carlyle, it is true, was worth a dozen Scotts, but he was a Scotchman, and come as near it as he may, a Scotchman cannot do enduring work. So that Carlyle, in the natural order of things, is, as one might say, dropping down the ladder rung by rung. He has ceased to be a "force." People have discovered that his so-called

gospel is a somewhat cheap and snobbish affair. All that is really left of him is *The French Revolution*, which survives because of a certain vividness of style. For the rest, Carlyle looks like going to pieces. A century hence he will be of no more account than Christopher North is to-day.

As to Stevenson, while the Scotch are disposed to brag about him when occasion arises, they have always fought more or less shy of him. He has never been admitted to that cordial intimacy of relation which a Scotchman extends alike to Robbie Burns and Dr. R. S. Crockett. As a matter of fact, he wrote too well and with too sincere a regard for the finer elements of literature to be properly understood in Scotland. Further, he took the precaution not to interlard his English with such phrases as "ben the hoose," "getting a wee doited," and so forth. He had no use for Scotch idioms, and when he dropped into them he was sorry for it. And he did not stiffen his pages with panegyric of the Scotch character. In fact,

Stevenson tacitly refused to have anything to do with the advertising of his countrymen. He had the good sense to perceive that if you are to use the English language as a medium for expression, you might as well use it skilfully and decently while you are about it. More than all, he did not boast of having been born in a wynd, or of having pu'd fine gowans wi' Jeanie, the auld sweetie wife's dochter at Drumkettle.

And an author—a modern author—who is guilty of all these sins of commission and omission must not expect perfection from the warm heart of Scotia. Somehow the Scotch seem to be a nation of persons without fathers. Nearly every Scot one meets strikes one as being a first generation man. You know instinctively, even if he does not tell you, that in his childhood he ran about with untended nose and called his mother "mither." Even after he has been to "the college," and made some progress in the business or profession to which he may have devoted himself, he clings to his squalid origins and to the

manners of his forbears for dear life. He is the barbarian who scorns to be tamed. The tradition of Scottish independence demands that he should keep you well posted in the facts as to his humble descent and upbringing, and that he should go on speaking as much of his heaven-forsaken dialect as you will let him. To such a person a Scot of the Stevenson type does not appeal. Stevenson, of course, was a Scot, and meet to be bragged about as a successful Scot. For all that he was not a "brither Scot." He took to the English way and the English manner, and the brither Scots as a body had no alternative but to turn a sour face towards him. From the literary point of view, though he accomplished great things, R. L. S. is just another instance of the ultimate ineptitude of the Scotchman. He tried and tried and tried. No writer of our time has had nobler ideals. Yet he could not climb after his desire. His books are a procession of worthy and even splendid failures. The Scotchness of his blood, do what he might to eradicate it, was

too much for him. It kept him from attaining the highest.

To treat of the new school of Scottish writers in the present chapter is, perhaps, to do them too much honour. At no period in the history of letters has such flagrantly bad writing been offered to the English public as is being at present offered by our Scottish authors. Their works have been boomed into a vogue which they do not deserve, and even Scotchmen admit that their so-called transcripts from life are as false and as shoddy as such transcripts well could be. Writing on this subject, Mr. R. B. Cunninghame, himself a Scot, says: "If it pleases them (the hoot-awa'-man gang) to represent that half of the population of their native land is imbecile, the fault is theirs. But for the idiots, the precentors, elders of churches, the 'select men,' and those landward folk who have been dragged of late into publicity, I compassionate them, knowing their language has been distorted, and they themselves been rendered such abject snivellers,

that not a henwife, shepherd, ploughman, or any one who thinks in 'guid braid Scots' would recognise himself dressed in the motley which it has been the pride of kailyard writers to bestow. Neither would I have Englishmen believe that the entire Scotch nation is composed of ministers, elders, and maudlin whiskified physicians, nor even of precentors who are employed in Scotland to put the congregation out by starting hymns on the wrong note, or in a key impossible for any but themselves to compass." Mr. Cunninghame ought to know.

The other day I saw in a paper, edited, of course, by a Scotchman, a reference to "many contemporary Scottish men of letters." I do not hesitate to assert that the number of Scottish men of letters now living can be counted twice on the fingers of one hand. Indeed, with the persons who might be expected to count in such a category, in my mind's eye, I have difficulty in admitting that any one of them is a man of letters in the strict sense of the phrase. Even Dr.

Andrew Lang, who is by far the most competent Scotchman now writing, would probably not care to lay claim to the dignity which the term "men of letters" suggests.

XI

THE SCOT IN COMMERCE

When a Scotchman's parents decide that he shall be neither a minister nor a journalist, or when a wee laddie who has been dedicated to one or other of these offices kicks over the traces, or turns out something of a failure, there are still splendid openings for him. Far away to the south stretches that land of milk and honey—"England"—and there is scarcely a square mile of it whereon you do not find either a shop or a bank or a factory, or some other hive of industry created, of course, for the special benefit of Scotchmen. Donald, the hobbledehoy, that would not be a minister, and was not intended for a professor, and had not shorthand enough to be a journalist, is packed off South to wear an

apron, to shovel gold behind bars, or "to work his way up" in an engineering establishment, as the case may be. Furthermore, he is understood to make an excellent gardener, and not a few English noblemen like to keep him about their places weeding and pruning, and feeding hogs. In the main, however, he rather tends to become a clerk in an office. There is something about being able to keep your coat on while you work and to be in the confidence of Mr. Foozlem's books,—of holding, in short, a "position of trust," at thirty shillings a week, which is peculiarly attractive to the Scottish mind; and employers of clerical labour appear to be firmly convinced that Donald is the man for them. They like him because he is never late, he is always putting a bit by, and he is as cheap as horseflesh. His slowness and want of sagacity are no great matter. The fact that he can only work in grooves also does not matter. Thrift and punctuality, not to mention cheapness, clothe him with virtues like a garment, and when higher posts

fall vacant, your employer—good, easy man—has a way of turning a hopeful eye on "that steady young Scot." The late remarkable case of Mr. Goudie, who was as Scotch as you make them, and, perhaps, the greatest and stupidest rogue that has adorned the annals of modern banking, shows what a Scotch clerk can do when he tries. The genius of his country asserted itself in the matter of Mr. Goudie, and we saw what we saw. In banks, at any rate, to be Scotch will not be to rank with Cæsar's wife for quite a little time to come. Of course, we shall be told that the raking up of Goudie is unfair. It always is unfair to say anything to the detriment of Scotchmen. But the point I wish to insist upon is that Scotch clerks and Scotch managers and Scotchmen at large are no more trustworthy and no more to be depended upon and no less human than Englishmen. The Scotch themselves spare no effort to have it believed that if you want men of true probity, you must go to Scotland for them. Employers have taken them at

their word and continue to take them at their word, and, all other things being equal, if there are two applicants for a position in the average commercial house, and one of them is English and the other Scotch, the Scotchman gets the preference, simply because he is Scotch.

Among Dr. Maclaren's Drumtochty marvels, there is an old couple who have a son who is a professor. That son, being, of course, a model of what a son should be, writes home to his good mother once a week, and the letter is invariably forthcoming in the kirkyard on Sundays, so that all who care to read may be informed as to the professor's condition and progress. Many touching things are said by the admirers of this honest couple as to the honour their son has conferred upon "the Glen," and the general prodigiousness of his character and position. But it never occurs to Dr. Maclaren to put into the mouth of any of his people a single word as to what is thought of the professor by the persons with whom he is dealing.

What do his fellow professors think of him? What do his students think of him? We all know that professor from Drumtochty, and we all wish that Drumtochty had kept him. Not only in universities, but wherever there is a modest living to be made, there you will find him in full bloom, and the more authority he has, the less possible is he to get on with. As a colleague, too, he is equally objectionable. When a certain Scotch lady was informed during the time of the Indian Mutiny that her son had been captured by the enemy with other prisoners and that he had been put into a chain-gang, she said with emotion, "God help the man that's chained to oor Sandy." And this is precisely the trouble. To work amicably with a Scotchman in any commercial capacity is well nigh an impossibility. He is eaten up with a squint-eyed envy; the fear that for some inscrutable reason you wish to oust him out of his occupation is ever with him, and it is part of his creed and code to shoulder out any fellow worker who happens to be

getting a little more money or a little more credit than himself. In fact, when he comes to take up any sort of a berth, it is with the consciousness that, as a Scot, it is his duty by hook or by crook to make himself master of the situation, and, if needs be, to turn out in the long run his own employer. If you ask a Scotchman how it comes to pass that so many of his compatriots hold positions of influence in commercial houses, he will reply, nine times out of ten, "Well, you see, we just drop into them." If this were so, nobody would mind, but as a matter of fact, your Scotchman is far too calculating to drop into anything. His great game is the game of grab; he will move heaven and earth to get what he wants, and, as Dr. Robertson Nicoll has told us, he is not over-scrupulous in his methods of getting it. Every commercial man could give instances of this over-reachingness which is such an essential feature of the policy of the Scotch employee. Live and let live is not at all in his way. Of gratitude for help rendered he knows nothing. He

begins life with sycophancy, and the moment he meets with any sort of success, he assumes a truculent over-bearingness which he is pleased to call force of character. When you hear of men being deprived of their positions by sharp practice and shiftiness, no matter whether it be in a draper's shop or in a gilt-edged bank, you will find that nine times out of ten there is a Scotchman in the case; that it is the Scotchman who has got up the bother, and that it is the Scotchman who is to take the post the other man vacates. Dr. Nicoll, who is a veritable encyclopædia of Scotch character, wrote some time ago a number of articles which he called *Firing out the Fools*. He asserted very properly that in most business houses there are always a number of fools who are a dead weight on progress. The capable men who are not quite capable enough are the plague of most heads of commercial concerns. You want a man to do such and such things; you look round your staff; you consider the merits of this and that person, and you feel that none of

them is exactly the person you want. What are you to do? If you endeavour to get a man from outside, the chances are that he will be no better than the men you have. Dr. Nicoll, of course, knows exactly what you should do. He does not say, "Send for the nearest Scotchman," because that would be a little too explicit; but he does say that plod is the great quality which distinguishes competence from foolishness, and, as everybody knows, the Scot is nothing if not a plodder. Plod, plod, plod, with plenty of divagations into plotting and scheming, is the essence of his life. And when all is said and done, plod may be counted about the meanest and least desirable of the virtues. It is to the plodders that we owe pretty well everything we wished we had not got. The very word plod is about the ugliest and the most nauseating in the English language. Your plodder may plod and plod and plod, but he never does anything that is more than middling. In the arts this is a fact beyond traverse. The plodding artist is still a student

at fifty; the plodding writer is a fool to the end of his life; the plodding actor says, "My Lord, the carriage waits," till the workhouse or the grave claims him for its own. This being so, why should the plodder be the only ware in commercial matters? Brilliancy and imagination are nowadays just as much wanted in business as in any other department of life. Tact and a reasonably decent feeling for your fellow-man are also wanted. Your Scot, on his own showing, does not possess these qualities. He even goes so far as to disdain them and to assure you that they are not consistent with "force of character" and "rugged independence." The moral is obvious, and I should not be surprised if English employers of labour have not already begun to take it to heart. Fire out the fools! is a shibboleth which comes ill from a Scotchman, because in the large result it may easily mean, Fire out the Scotchmen.

XII

THE SCOT AS A DIPSOMANIAC

UNDER the inspiring tutelage of the national bard, Scotland has become one of the drunkenest nations in the world. Among the lower classes of the Scotch cities drunkenness is the preponderating vice. In the rural districts whiskey is the only beverage that finds any sort of favour. There is no occasion of life which does not provoke the average Scotchman to inhibition. Births, deaths, and marriages are all celebrated in drink. On Burns Day, Scotland rushes to the bottle as one man. The same is true of New Year's Day; and year in and year out everybody "tastes" and "tastes" and "tastes" from morn to dewy eve. The land simply seethes in whiskey, and though you take hold of the

wings of the morning you cannot get away from the odour of it. In twelve hours spent in Edinburgh I saw more drinking than could be seen in an English town of the same population in a couple of days, and I know what drinking means.

Whiskey to breakfast, whiskey to dinner, whiskey to supper; whiskey when you meet a friend, whiskey over all business meetings whatsoever; whiskey before you go into the kirk, whiskey when you come out; whiskey when you are about to take a journey, whiskey all along the road, whiskey at the journey's end; whiskey when you are well, whiskey if you be sick, whiskey almost as soon as you are born, whiskey the last thing before you die—that is Scotland. There is a cock-and-bull tale to the effect that all the finest clarets go to Leith and are drunk in Edinburgh. Practically, there is no really good claret in all Scotland, unless it be at the hotels which have been built for the reception of English and American tourists, and the Scot to the manner born would not

give you a "thank you" for the best claret in the world. "Go bring me a pint of wine and bring it in a silver tassy" was a mere piece of swagger on the part of the bard. Wine is not drunk in Scotland; the Scotchman can get no "forrader" with it, and as for drinking it out of a silver tassy, there are not more than three silver tassies in the country. Whiskey, and that of the crudest and most shuddering quality is undoubtedly the Scotchman's peculiar vanity. The amount that he can consume without turning a hair is quite appalling. I have seen a Scotchman drink three bottles of Glenlivet on a railway journey from King's Cross to Edinburgh, and when he got out at Edinburgh he strutted doucely to the refreshment bar and demanded further whiskey. In London, and particularly in Fleet Street, his feats in this connection are notorious. In the more central quarters of London there are a number of hostelries which are almost wholly devoted to Scottish requirements in the way of ardent liquors. Under some Scotch name, such as

the Scotch Stores, the Clachan, the Highland Laddie, and so forth, these places flourish and the proprietors of them wax fat. Here, any morning in the week, you will find brither Scots assembled, elbow on counter, indulging in the whiskey which delights their souls. All day there is plenty of company, plenty of Doric, plenty of discussion on politics and the questions of the hour, but more than all, a steady flow of whiskey. And by eleven P.M. or thereabouts the company begins to exhibit a tendency to song. And at closing time it staggers forth singing *Scots Wha Hae* and *My Ain Kind Dearie O* in various pathetic keys. *Scots Wha Hae* is a poor song to sing in the circumstances, and as for *My Ain Kind Dearie O*, she probably fumes at home and is not in the least kind in her welcoming of her whiskeyful lord. It is certain that the number of persons in Fleet Street employed upon the press either in literary capacities or as advertisement canvassers or printers is very considerable, and among the lower grades of them, the drinking of whiskey

appears to be considered a part of their duty to themselves and to mankind at large. At the same time it is only fair to say that a drunken Scotchman is not by any means a common spectacle, the reason being that the Scot is so inured to the consumption of whiskey from his youth up, that he can take almost any quantity without becoming drunk about the legs. Drink, however, he must and will have, and both at home and abroad he makes a point of getting as much of it as his means will allow. In Scotland it is quite general for men and women alike to drink whiskey raw and to take the water afterwards. This is done at every meal, and if you call upon a Scotch household at any hour of the day you will be at once offered a four- or five-finger dose of the national drink. To refuse it is to be set down for an evilly-disposed person. Burns the Almighty approved of whiskey drinking; with him it was the symbol of good-fellowship, and he is quoted to you continually as the justification of all excesses.

> We are na drunk, we're no' that drunk
> But just a drappie in our ee,

is the great retort used by Scotchmen if one suggests that they have had enough or too much.

It is to the Scot's amazing capacity for the consumption of spirit that one may fairly attribute some of his minor defects. Dourness, of which every Scotchman possesses a fair share, and of which he is invariably more or less proud, has always struck me as being in a great measure the outcome of too much whiskey overnight. It is not till he is properly exhilarated with drink that a Scot can unbend himself in the smallest degree. Once primed, he does his best to prove himself an excellent and generous fellow by becoming as uproarious as the host of the tavern in which he is drinking will allow him to be. But next morning, when the whiskey is out of him, he is a very sad and sober man indeed. Then it is that he passes for "dour." You talk with him and get for answers grunts: he cannot smile; he plods heavily away at whatever

labour stands in front of him; he is glum, rude of tongue and dull of mind, and his brethren set it down for you to his "Scots dourness."

His gift of steady drinking also accounts, in my opinion, for his general mediocrity. Whiskey may be a fine and healthy drink for persons who do not take enough of it; but to be braced up with it by day and to swim in it by night is calculated to have a detrimental effect even on the bright intellects that come out of Scotland. I have not the smallest desire to suggest that there are not plenty of hard drinkers whose blood is more or less purely English, yet somehow there is no kind of man in the world who makes the drinking of furious spirit a *cultus* and a boast in the way that the Scotchman does. To be fou', or as he would put it, to have a drappie in his eye, is the Scotchman's notion of bigness and freedom and manly independence. He is a ranter and a roarer in his cups, and on the whole much more distressing to meet drunk than sober, which is saying a great deal.

XIII

THE SCOT AS CRIMINAL

BURNS, like every other Scotchman that has trailed a pen, did not fail to help along the Scottish advertisement with a suitable contribution. He wrote *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, and thereby did a great thing for Scotland, setting up a picture of Scottish home life and piety which the generations seem to regard as authentic. We have all been taught to admire the moral excellences of that cottar, not to mention the moral excellences of his wife and children:

With joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,
And each for others' welfare kindly spiers;
The social hours swift winged, unnotic'd fleet,
Each tells the unco's that he see or hears.

The parents partial eye their hopeful years,
Anticipation forward prints the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new,
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their masters' and their mistresses' command
The younkers a' are warned to obey.
And mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
And ne'er tho' out of sight to jauk or play—
And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway.
And mind your duty, duly morn and night,
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might,
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright.

All of which is very fine, and, with much more to the like effect, has helped the Scotch peasant into an odour of sanctity which on the whole does not appear to be quite his element. Indeed, so far from conducting his life in the manner suggested by *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, the average Scot of the lower orders appears to base himself on the more scandalous portion of Burns's writing.

According to the latest returns, the population of Scotland is 4,472,000. In the year 1900, which is the latest year for which statistics are available, a matter of 180,000 per-

sons were charged with criminal offences in Scotland. So that out of every twenty-five Scotchmen in Scotland one is either a convicted criminal or a person who has been charged with a criminal offence. From the official Buff-book dealing with the subject I take the following:

"The criminal returns for 1900 show an increase over those for the previous year under all the important classes into which crime and offences are grouped, the number of persons charged has risen to close upon 180,000, and if we compare this with the last published English tables for the year 1899, we shall find, for equal numbers of population, Scotland has over three charges for every two in England.

"Furthermore, imprisonments in Scotland continue to be proportionately much higher than in England, and for every three committals in England there are seven in Scotland. The increase in criminal offences during 1900 is distributed under the following heads":

Culpable homicide	28
Assaults of husbands on wives	690
Cruel and unnatural treatment of children	242
Housebreaking of all kinds	190
Theft	1,916
Malicious mischief	986
Betting games and lotteries	96
Breach of the peace, etc.	519
Cruelty to animals	145
Offences in relation to dogs	148
Drunkenness	5,785
Offences against Elementary Education Acts	397
Army deserters	1,207
Offences against Police Acts, by-laws and regulations	9,570
Prostitution	613
Bicycling, etc., offences	367
Obstructions and nuisances, and other Road Act offences	2,664
Public Health Act offences	162
Lodging without consent of owner under Vagrancy Acts	425
	26,150

It will thus be seen that theft and drunkenness bear the gree among Scotch crimes, while the large number of offences against police acts, by-laws, and regulations tends to show that the Scot is not a good citizen. The mere statistics as to crime, however, do not give one anything like an adequate idea of the general depravity of the Scotch charac-

ter. To understand it properly we must add to the criminal returns the illegitimacy returns.

From Dr. Albert Leffingwell's [1] book on illegitimacy I take the following passage:

"In 1881 the census of Scotland showed that there were then living in that portion of the kingdom 492,454 unmarried women (that is to say, spinsters and widows) between the ages of fifteen and forty-five. During the ten years 1878–87 there were born in Scotland 105,091 illegitimate children, or an annual average of twenty-one to each thousand unmarried females at this specified age. In England and Wales the corresponding number of the unmarried females was 3,046,431, and the number of illegitimate births during the same period was 426,184, or fourteen to each thousand of the possible mothers. In Ireland, the number of unmarried women at this age was a third larger than in Scotland, or 731,767. Yet to

[1] Albert Leffingwell, M.D., *Illegitimacy: Two Studies in Demography.*

each thousand of these were born every year less than five illegitimate children during a ten-year period, 1878–87. Here again we are perplexed with the problem why Scotia and Hibernia should present such widely different contrasts. Every year in Scotland there are *five times the proportion* of bastards that see the light in Ireland!"

Dr. Leffingwell's perplexity is the perplexity of the scientific person. That Burns should have anything to do with illegitimacy of Scotia would probably seem ridiculous to the scientific mind, but I believe that Burns, and the spirit of loose living for which he stands, have been to no little extent responsible for bringing Scotland to the discreditable and degrading pass indicated by Dr. Leffingwell's figures.

In Ireland the rate of illegitimacy is 4.4, in Scotland, 21.5 to each thousand unmarried women. Now, the poet who stands in the same relation to the Irish people as Burns does to the Scotch is Thomas Moore. He has given Ireland quite as considerable a body

of songs as Burns has given to Scotland. He is just as essentially Irish as Burns is Scotch; but compare the tone of the two men. One of them gives you *The lass who made the bed to me*, the other, *Rich and rare were the gems she wore*. In reading Burns you find that quite two thirds of what he has written is marred by unpleasant and libidinous suggestion, but there is not a line of Moore which would not pass muster in a ladies' school. To the rantin' roarin' Billies of Scotland the difference may form material for a sneer, but in the long run, clearly, the advantage is with the women of Ireland. If Scotland wishes to get rid of her drunkenness and to lessen the crime which arises out of it, and if she wishes to bring herself into line with the ordinary standards of decency, she will, I am afraid, have to put a little less trust in that mighty performer before the Flesh—Robert Burns.

XIV

THE SCOT BY ADOPTION

I HAVE been told that there are two kinds of Scotchmen, and that it would be a mistake to confound them, or to suggest that they have any characteristics in common. One kind, and the best kind, I am assured, is the Highlander. The other—and the more disreputable kind—is the Scotchman of the Lowlands. I have met both sorts, and I have not been able to discover that there is much to choose between them. For all practical purposes the blood is identical. It may at one time have been of two distinct strains, but these appear to have become in a great measure fused, and the blend is not beautiful. I think it was Dr. Cunninghame Graham who said of a certain Scotch peddler that he

looked like a cross between a low-class Indian and an ourang-outang that had somehow got itself baptised. This, no doubt, is a little severe. But a Scotchman does certainly make one feel that underneath his unsatisfactory and obviously imperfect civilisation the hairy simian sits and grins. Rouse him, thwart him, disappoint him, rally him, and suddenly your cross-eyed, sandy-haired, bandy-legged, but withal sleek, smug, moralising man suddenly "bleezes," and you perceive in him the ten thousand devils of an ancient and arboreal barbarity. Whether he be Highlander or Lowlander or mongrel, as he mostly is, it is just the same. He is Scotch and compounded for the most part of savage. Like the converted Krooboy, he may at any time revert into his immemorial primalism and you can never be sure of him. Whether he hail from the Isles or from the Lothians, the Scot is just the Scot, and there is nothing more to be said for him.

There is, however, a kind of Scot who,

while not of Scotch blood, has adopted the manners and habits of Caledonia, and is rather flattered if you take him for a true-born Scotchman. This type of creature usually owes his retrogression to the fact that he has married a Scotch wife. Of Scotch-women as a body, I do not wish to say anything that will be considered ungallant. If one passes over their abnormal capacity for thrift, I suppose they are pretty much the same as other women. So far as I am aware I have not met more than a dozen Scotch-women in my life. Two of them I have known intimately, and I have always thanked my stars that I was not married to either of them. But to return to our Scotchman by adoption. Usually, as I say, he is married to a Scotchwoman. Before you arrive at a knowledge of this circumstance, you are inclined to wonder what is the matter with him. His style and proclivities have induced you to set him down for a Scotchman, yet you find that his Doric is bad, that he eats his porridge with sugar and takes his whiskey

with soda, and that he was born in Gloucestershire. Also, he tells you frankly that his parents were not Scotch, and he adds, with a look of supreme satisfaction, "but my wife is." And straightway he plunges into tender reminiscences of the days of his courtship, touches modestly upon the wealth and importance of his wife's relations, hints at the fearful expense to which he was put by his many journeys North when he went a-wooing, and gurgles with a sickly smile that it was worth the trouble, and that he does not know "what he would do without her." All of which is mightily interesting. If you pursue your investigations further, you will find that the man is perhaps a little more to pity than to blame. He has been compelled to become as Scotch as he knows how, willy-nilly. At the head of his table sits the daughter of Scotia—ruddy, chapped, and sharp of tongue; she looks down on things English, her husband included; her children are taught to remember that their grandfather is a provost and magnificent in the

jute line; she keeps her house in the Scotch manner, her servants are Scotch, her household linens are Scotch, her beef is Scotch, and her whiskey is Scotch; her little boys wear tartan; tripe is the great dish for supper, and her husband must eat oatmeal to the verge of scrofula. Abroad, too, this man must be as Scotch as the best of them. In his place of business, Scotchmen *protégés* of his wife's relations are the only ware: he loathes them, and they laugh at him behind his back, but he has to put up with them. On Saturdays they instruct him in the mysteries of "gowf"; on Mondays they tell one another what a "damned foozler" he is. His holidays are always spent in the Western Highlands; he is everlastingly seeing his wife off to Aberdeen; he banks at the Bank of Scotland; he smokes the tobacco which has been so ably pushed into fame by Dr. J. M. Barrie; he believes that the Glasgow bailies know what they are about; his money, which has been scraped together on the Scotch principle, is doucely put away in Scotch ventures; and

altogether Scotland does very well out of him. The fact that he is a mean little man does not worry him. The practice and view of life which the lady of his affections has forced upon him is bringing him a due share of this world's gear, and in that fact he takes consolation for his attenuated honesty, his lost manhood, and his lost nationality. This is one side of the picture and the brightest.

On the other side it were well for us not to look too closely. The Englishman who has been appropriated by a Scotch wife does not always succeed in profiting by the worldly wisdom with which his spouse would imbue him. Then there is trouble. For a Scotchwoman who cannot report to her kindred in Scotland that her husband is "getting on" feels that she has been robbed of the prime joy of existence. Her contempt for the man who cannot win and grip siller eats into her soul, until she has no other sentiment left. Bit by bit she develops into a scold and a curtain-lecturer; the man who found her so fair by the Birks of Aberfeldey becomes a

furtive wanderer from her side, and it all ends in too much whiskey, recrimination, and execration. I know an Englishman of parts who has never earned enough money to be under the necessity of paying income tax. He is a man of small stature and limp, and he has a great fear in his eyes. He is one of those men who might have done things and have omitted to do them. The gossip about him is that he is badly married. Once I saw his wife. She was a big, raw-boned Scotch-woman, with a heavy accent on her. It was New Year's Eve, and she had evidently been "tasting." At sight of me, out of the big-ness of her Scotch hospitality, she proposed a "nep," and half filled three glasses from a stone bottle. Then, with hand on hip, glass uplifted, and a blaze on her face, she cried: "Here's tae us and to hell with the English." We drank the toast in something of a silence. Later, when I was about to leave, my limp friend would have accompanied me to the door. But the mistress of his heart would have none of it. "Ye'll awa'," she said,

then, "to yer bed; yer friend is no' that fou but he can find his ain way oot." So that we shook hands and parted on the stair. The man had had twenty years of it. I understand him.

The idiot who takes to wearing kilts and speaking with an accent for the mere sake of it is scarcely worth notice. But there are such people even outside Colney Hatch. What they see in the Scotch to admire to the point of spuriousness I cannot for the life of me make out. The garb of old Gaul is, no doubt, very fetching from the point of view of the weak-minded, but of its effeminacy there can be no doubt. Really, it is a costume for small and pretty boys who are too young to be breeched. In view of its associations and of its innate childishness,—not to say immodesty,—it is a great pity that any Englishman should go out of his way to wear it.

XV

THE SCOT AND ENGLAND

Although the political relations between Scotland and England would seem to have been of the smoothest since the Act of Union, and in spite of the fact that on the whole the merging of the two peoples under one Government has tended hugely to the benefit of Scotland, it is the Scotch fashion to lament the Union with groans and to insist that 1707 was a black year for Scotchmen. I believe that were it not for the circumstance that Scotland cannot produce capable men even in the way of agitators we should soon have at St. Stephen's a Scotch party which would be just as troublesome and just as noisy and truculent as is the Irish party. I believe, too, that within twelve months' time as big a

demand for Home Rule and as much disquiet and rebellion could be got up in Scotland as have ever existed in Ireland. Fortunately, however, the Scotch possess neither the requisite agitators nor the requisite pluck to indulge in serious demonstrations against the Imperial Government. So that they have to content themselves with futile grumbling and petty acts of disloyalty. The Scot has always been more or less of a fine hand at a treason. Out of Scotland has come the only treasonable organisation which England can boast of at the present day. I refer, of course, to that absurd group of persons who once a year decorate the statue of Charles I. at Whitehall with cheap wreaths, and circulate leaflets which profess to prove that the reigning monarch in these realms is a usurper, and that our only true monarch is a woman by the name of Mary, who lives somewhere on the Continent. In any country but England these gentry would be laid by the heels; though the mere fact that they are Scotch renders them quite ineffective.

We can afford to smile at them. All the same, we must remember that if they could make trouble they would. Even in the matter of the King's Coronation the Scotch have managed to give us the usual display of stupid insolence. Writing to his paper in May last, the Scottish correspondent of the *Times* said:

"The approaching coronation of the King and Queen seems to have awakened rather less enthusiasm in certain quarters than either the Jubilee or the Diamond Jubilee of her late Majesty. It would be absurd to make much of the difference, but it does exist. In a word, the celebration of the event will be distinctly more official than the rejoicings over the two notable epochs of Queen Victoria's later life. Two circumstances have helped to bring this about—the Royal proclamation of two successive holidays, and what is known in Scotland as the 'numeral.' They are both absolutely sentimental considerations, but they have had a slight influence. Trades councils, becoming 'permeated'

with Socialism, protest against what they are pleased to call the 'mummery' in London, and the association of themselves therewith through local rejoicings, and the idea of losing two days' pay in one week is just sufficient to arouse their resentment, which some corporations have tried to appease by ignoring the proclamation, or applying it, on their own initiative, to one of the days only. The 'numeral' connotes the quasi-patriotic objection to the assumption of the title of King Edward VII. by his Majesty. Some Scotsmen persist in refusing to see that, in calling himself the Seventh Edward, the King neither intended to, nor did, insinuate that he was the seventh of that name who had reigned over the United Kingdom, and they declaim in grotesque fashion against the payment of any kind of homage to the Crown. Their insignificance is shown by the snub administered to them recently by the Convention of Burghs, which is nothing if it is not truly and characteristically Scottish: their influence is no less unmistakable

in the resolution of several public bodies to omit the 'numeral' from the inscription on their coronation medals, and in the untimely fits of economy that have overcome some local authorities not as a rule averse to feasting."

It is the old tale over again. The Scotch braggart cry—"unconquered and unconquerable"—is made to rend the welkin whenever the opportunity serves. Edward the Seventh, of course, cannot be Edward the Seventh of Scotland. It would never do. Therefore the "numeral" must not appear on Scotch medals, and the rejoicings are to be as far as possible of an official character. The ululation over the loss of two days' pay also is eminently Scotch. There is a time for work and a time for play, says the wise man; but the whey-faced Scot plays always with a certain disconsolateness because he feels that he is losing money all the time. The fact is, that Scottish life and Scottish manners are almost entirely dominated by the more evil traits of the Scotch character.

Independence and thrift must be read into everything the Scotchman does. Poverty-stricken, starveling pride has been the ruin of the Scottish people. It has made many of them sour, disagreeable, greedy, and disloyal; it has made some of them hypocrites and crafty rogues; it has narrowed their minds and stunted their national development; it has made them a by-word and a mock in all the countries of the world, and it has brought them to opprobrium even among Turks and Chinamen.

The career of the Scotchman in England has been picturesquely summarised by Dr. Cunninghame Graham:

"In the blithe times of clans and moss-troopers [he says], when Jardines rode and Johnstones raised, when Grahams stole, McGregors plundered, and Campbells prayed themselves into fat sinecures, we were your enemies. In stricken fields you southern folks used to discomfit us by reason of your archers and your riders sheathed in steel. We on the borders had the vantage of you, as

you had cattle for us to steal, houses to burn, and money and valuables for us to carry off. We having none, you were not in a state to push retaliation in an effective way. Later, we sent an impecunious king to govern you, and with him went a train of ragged courtiers, all with authentic pedigrees but light of purse. From this time date the Sawnies and the Sandies, the calumnies about our cuticle, and those which stated that we were so tender-hearted that we scrupled to deprive of life the smallest insect which we had about our clothes. You found our cheek-bones out, saw our red hair, and noted that we blew our noses without a pocket-handkerchief, to save undue expense. . . . So far so good. But still you pushed discovery to whiskey, haggis, sneeshin, predestination, and all the other mysteries both of our cookery and our faith. The bagpipes burst upon you (with a skirl), and even Shakespeare set down things about them which I refrain from quoting, only because I do not wish to frighten gentlewomen. . . . King George

came in, in pudding time, and all was changed, and a new race of Scotsmen dawned on the English view. The '15 and the '45 sent out the Highlanders, rough-footed and with deerskin thongs tied round their heads, . . . they marched and conquered and made England reel, retreated, lost Culloden, and the mist received them back. But their brief passage altered your views again, and you perceived that Scotland was not all bailie, prayer-monger, merchant, and sanctimonious cheat. . . . Then Scott arose and threw a glamour over Scotland which was nearly all his own. True, we were poor, but then our poverty was so romantic, and we appeared fighting for home and haggis, for foolish native kings, for hills, for heather, freedom, and for all those things which Englishmen enjoy to read about, but which in actual life they take good care only themselves shall share. The pale-faced master and the Highland chief, the ruined gentleman, the swashbuckler, soldier, faithful servant, and the rest, he marked and made his

own, but then he looked about to find his counterfoil, the low comedians without whose presence every tragedy must halt.

"Then came the Kailyarders, and said that Scott was Tory, Jacobite, unpatriotic, unpresbyterian, and they alone could draw the Scottish type. England believed them, and their large sale and cheap editions clinched it, and to-day a Scotchman stands confessed a sentimental fool, a canting cheat, a grave, sententious man, dressed in a 'stan o' black,' oppressed with the tremendous difficulties of the jargon he is bound to speak, and, above all, weighed down with the responsibilities of being Scotch."

As I have already mentioned, Dr. Cunninghame Graham is a Scot.

The whole truth about the Scotch relation with England is that the Scot is more than sensible of the advantage it brings him, but being by disposition wise as a serpent, he is afraid that if he did not pretend to deplore it, it might not last in its present comfortable unrestrictedness. Of course, this fear is en-

tirely baseless. The Englishman is too easy hearted to make laws against needy aliens whether from north of the Tweed or elsewhere. All the same, the Scot continues to howl on principle. He will not have our King, he will not have the "numeral," to call him English or even include him under the term British is an indignity and an outrage. The Act of Union was a big mistake: the poor Scot has been trodden down forbye ever since, and altogether he is sorry that he is alive. And, for my own part, I am quite inclined to think that there is much to be said for the latter sentiment.

XVI

THE WAY OUT

I DO not think it is an exaggeration to describe England as a Scot-ridden country. To whatever department of activity one looks one finds therein, working his way up for all he is worth and by not over-scrupulous methods, the so-called canny Scot. In some professions, notably that of journalism, as I have shown, he has made himself more or less predominant. In banks, offices, and manufactories he is to be found as frequently as not, ruling the roost in the capacity of manager or overseer; and in the general atmosphere of Anglo-Saxon business life there is a persistent feel of him. That he should come from his own heathery wastes and starved townlets to a richer land is quite

natural. That he should desire to do his best for himself and for people of his own blood is also natural. But that he should put on airs and forget that, after all, he is an alien and a person who by good right is with us only on sufferance, is the mistake he makes. The power that he has got for himself has been won largely by combination and advertisement. The Scotch superstition is the oyster out of which he lives. That superstition was never more general than it is to-day, and the advertisement of Scottish virtues and Scottish capacities was never in merrier progress. The time has come, I think, for Englishmen to make a stand in the matter. At any rate, the time has come for the Scotchman to be taught his place. One would hesitate to suggest that he should be got rid of entirely, for he has his uses and his good qualities. As a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, as a person fitted by temperament for the exercise of mechanical functions, he is all very well; but in matters where intellect and sparkle are required he

should be left severely alone. To rid the press of his influence would be an excellent thing for the press. It cannot be shown that he is of the least use in journalism, or that he does things any better, whether as reporter, sub-editor, or editor, than the average Englishman. And it can be shown that he has used his influence on the press for purposes which, however legitimate they may appear to him, are not in the public interest. It is not in the public interest that every newspaper one picks up should contain certificates of character for the Scotch; it is not in the public interest that he should be continually written down for a person of especial intellect, probity, shrewdness, humour, and the rest. His intellect, in point of fact, is middling; his probity merely average; his shrewdness questionable, and his humour neither here nor there. As a subordinate he is always a very doubtful bargain. As a person in authority he is just a bully—"a bad master," as Dr. Nicoll puts it. Employers of labour would find it distinctly to

their interest to look into the question and to find out how far they are being imposed upon by mere sententiousness and wise looks with nothing behind them that is of consequence. It is not too much to say that if you have a Scotchman in your place of business, you are, as a rule, all the weaker for it. If you go thoroughly into him you will find that his only quality is his capacity for plod; as against this he has many ugly traits—jealousy, over-reachingness, and greediness among them. Rarely, if ever, does he understand his business, and of initiative and originality he is, as a rule, devoid. Changes and advances are not at all in his line. If you ask him for something new, something out of the ordinary, he will bring it to you and impress you (by talk) with the notion that you are getting what you want; but if you examine it, you will find that it is not new at all, and that really it is not what you want.

The Scot, in fact, rarely rises above mediocrity; he seldom has an inspiration or a happy thought; he cannot rise to occasions,

and while he is most punctual in his attention to duty and most assiduous and steadfast as a labourer, his work is never perfectly done, and too frequently it is scamped and carried out without regard to finish or excellence. Of pride or delight in labour the Scotchman knows nothing. He works in order that he may get money and secure his own personal advancement. His loyalty is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence; he will be loyal to you just as long as you are paying him more than he can get elsewhere, and the moment somebody comes along with a better offer, there is an end of you so far as he is concerned.

There are not wanting signs that, in spite of the manner in which it has been hidden and bolstered up, the Scotchman's real character is beginning to be properly understood. Nobody can say, with any show of truth, that the Scot is either loved or admired by the peoples with whom he comes in contact outside his own country. Indeed, I believe that throughout England there is a very strong anti-Scotch feeling. I have found it difficult

to meet an Englishman who, if you questioned him straightly, would not admit that he has a rooted dislike for Scotchmen. That dislike the Scotchman has himself aroused. His bumptiousness and uncouthness, his lack of manners, his frequent lack of principle, and his want of decent feeling, have brought and will continue to bring their own reward. In this book I feel that I have merely touched the fringe of the subject. Facts that go to prove the main contentions I have laid down abound. I have not been able to use a tithe of them. Every person of understanding can give you instance after instance of the Scotchman's underbredness, ineptitude, and disposition to meanness. Furthermore, Scotchmen themselves are full of such instances. Indeed, for the material used in most of the chapters of this work I am indebted to Scotchmen. From first to last I have done my best to convict them out of their own mouths, and if I have failed, the fault is not the fault of the Scotch.

For the general guidance of young Scotch-

men who wish to succeed in this country and who do not desire to add further opprobrium to the Scotch character, I shall offer a few broad hints, which are worth taking to heart:

I. Remember that outside Scotland you are a good deal of a foreigner.

II. Be assured that the King's English is the language which decent men expect you to speak in England.

III. Dourness is really not a virtue.

IV. There is nothing specially creditable in having been born on a muck heap. Do not boast about it.

V. There are greater virtues than thrift. It is better to die penniless than to have been too much of a saver.

VI. Never undertake what you cannot do. A shut mouth and a sententious air will not serve you for ever.

VII. Do not set up to be a judge of any of the fine arts. You are not intended for it.

VIII. Try to forget that the Battle of Bannockburn was won by the Scotch in 1314. The dates of Flodden and Culloden are much better worth remembering, though most Englishmen have forgotten both of them.

IX. Do your best to live down Dr. Nicoll's suggestion that you are not over-scrupulous in your methods of dealing with competitors.

X. IF, WITHOUT SERIOUS INCONVENIENCE TO YOURSELF, YOU CAN MANAGE TO REMAIN AT HOME, PLEASE DO.

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NEVER apologise before the offence is a good rule, and in certain circumstances a still better rule is, do not apologise at all. I have not the smallest intention of regretting anything that has been written in the foregoing chapters. But I am informed by a Scotchman who has been kind enough to read them in proof that there is some likelihood of their being misunderstood. This, of course, would be a thousand pities. So that I shall venture on what may be termed, for the want of a better phrase, an explanation. When Dr. Johnson was asked to explain his reasons for disliking the Scotch, his reply was of the vaguest. Lamb also did not quite know why he disliked them; and, on the whole, it is difficult to say flatly why one cannot get on with the simple child of

Caledonia. As a matter of fact, my own antipathy always amuses me. Whether it will amuse the Scotch is another matter. But for the sake of their own peace of mind I should like to ask them not to jump to foolish conclusions about various hard things I have said. Since the time of Burns, Scotchmen appear to have yearned for some one who should show them their faults:

> Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oorsels as ithers see us!

is as frequent on their lips as "The best laid schemes o' mice and men," "A man's a man for a' that," and the rest of them. And, in this instance, I have simply done my best to play the rôle of "some power." To put an ugly man in front of a mirror is not, perhaps, to do him the most tender of services, especially if you comment upon his style of beauty the while. For all that, I am hoping that in some small measure I may be doing great and useful things for the Scotch as a nation. If they would only be at a little

pains to discover their faults and at a little more pains to correct them, one could encourage hopes for Scotland. "Much may be done with the Scotchman," said Dr. Johnson, "if you catch him young," or words to that effect. I am afraid that to all Scotchmen who have passed the age of forty the present volume will be a wasted lesson. But there appear to be a very large number of Scots who have not yet attained the prime of life, and it is among these that I expect my counsel to have effect. They really cannot do themselves the smallest hurt by taking to heart the warnings and advice which, as a result of great labour, are here put before them. Oh, my dear young Scottish friends, let me implore you to be wise in time. If I have beaten you with clubs, be assured that it is as much for your good as for my emolument. If you have bought this book, you never spent a few sixpences to better advantage in your life. If you have borrowed it, as I expect most of you have, you are forgiven, providing you will really try to mend.

For all things to which I have set my hand that may cause you pain I am truly sorry. Yet, as the chastisers of one's youth were wont to say, the punishment hurts me far more than it hurts you. I know you will believe me and do your best to love me. Whether you do or not, I shall ever continue to take a kindly interest in you and to pray for your general reform.

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